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**A Contribution to the Comparative  
Study of the Medieval Visions of  
Heaven and Hell, with Special  
Reference to the Middle-  
English Versions.**

**A DISSERTATION**

**PRESENTED TO THE BOARD OF UNIVERSITY STUDIES OF  
THE JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY FOR THE  
DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

**BY**

**ERNEST J. BECKER.**

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WANNER





# A CONTRIBUTION TO THE COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE MEDIEVAL VISIONS OF HEAVEN AND HELL, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE MIDDLE-ENGLISH VERSIONS.

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## INTRODUCTION.

The present study represents the result of an attempt to compare more closely than has hitherto been done the English medieval Visions of Heaven and Hell. The original plan was to specialize on one particular work (the *Vision of St. Paul*), and using it as a point of departure, to bring the other similar works into organic connection with it and with one another. Almost inevitably, however, the field for investigation grew broader and broader as the work went on; new and important points of contact constantly presented themselves, and it very soon became evident that the study, in order to attain even a partial degree of completeness, could not be confined within the boundaries of England. In order to trace the incidents of the English visions back to their ultimate sources, it became imperative to consider carefully certain intermediate continental works in connection with them; and from these it was but a short step to the earlier and more primitive works which constitute the foundation of medieval vision-literature.

No systematic comparative study of the visions, with a view to tracing their oldest elements to their sources, has yet been attempted. Such an undertaking, necessitating as it would a careful analysis of the forms which the doctrine of an after-life assumed among the various peoples, and a painstaking collation of the many elements thus obtained, would severely tax the powers of any single investigator. As Schermann puts it: "Diese Nachforschungen dürfen sich nicht damit begnügen die

einschlägigen Produkte eines der grossen Sprachstämme, wie etwa des indogermanischen, in den Kreis der Untersuchung zu ziehen. Dies verbietet sich schon durch die Natur der in Betracht kommenden litterarischen Werke, dann aber vornehmlich auch durch die Erwägung, dass die Möglichkeit einer um jene Schranken unbekümmerten Entlehnung nirgend so nahe liegt, als da, wo es sich um elementare religiöse Begriffe und ihre Weiterbildung handelt.”<sup>1</sup> It seems evident, therefore, that the only means by which a complete and satisfactory final result can possibly be obtained is through a large number of special studies tending to the same end. It is with this object in view that the present slight contribution, in specializing on the rise and development of the visions on English soil, is offered.

Aside from England, two stages in the general development of visions have been taken up in some detail in the following pages: Oriental influence, and the *Apocalypse of Peter*. Such a procedure hardly requires an apology. Many of the analogies between the visions and the oriental conceptions of the otherworld have been previously pointed out. But the data are widely scattered, and it seemed well to gather them, together with a few hitherto unnoticed points of similarity, into a connected account. Whereas the *Apocalypse of Peter*, being the earliest Christian vision—in our sense of the word—which we possess, seemed the best possible point from which to indicate the organic manner in which all the visions are connected.

The intermediate stages between these two cardinal points in vision-development are, 1. Classical antiquity; 2. The Old Testament; 3. Old Testament Apocrypha, especially the Book of Enoch; 4. The Canonical New Testament; 5. New Testament Apocrypha, especially the Gospel of Nicodemus. For the sake of completeness, these points will be briefly treated in the following pages.

Within Christian times, the works of the church fathers were of course chiefly instrumental in diffusing the visions. Homilies, commentaries, theological essays, and ecclesiastical histories were alive with accounts, in vision form, of the terrors of hell and of purgatory. These accounts were spread among the people by

<sup>1</sup> *Materialien zur Geschichte d. Indischen Visionslitteratur.* Leipzig, 1892, p. 3 f.

popular preachers and homilists, and in this way the visions no doubt became largely responsible for the epidemics of terror which pervaded the Middle Ages.

Thus we have the skeleton of vision-development established. Deriving the general form and many of the details from the East, the earliest Christian vision-writers grafted them upon such slight material as they found in the Old and New Testaments and their apocrypha, and attaching the names of Christian saints and martyrs to the results, launched them as inspired revelations. Barren in detail and crude in execution at first, they lived on in the minds of the people for several centuries without material alteration or embellishment. The church fathers made use of them to support their doctrines, and were chiefly instrumental in giving them the great vogue which they afterwards attained. Gregory the Great adduced them in support of his doctrine of purgatory, just as they are still adduced for the support of the same doctrine at the present day.<sup>1</sup> Through Gregory especially they passed into the work of local historians, such as Bede in England; and were taken up and diffused among the people by homilists, such as Aelfric. And all the while the clergy was becoming ever more and more powerful, and the people ever more and more panic-stricken at the thought of what even the least sinful of them would have to undergo before obtaining everlasting bliss. And the more panic-stricken the people became, the greater swelled the power of the clergy, till at last the terror of the one became a nervous disease afflicting nations at a time, and the power of the other greater than the world had ever known.

It was in such an unhealthy atmosphere that visions flourished in all their power. They are the outgrowth of a fundamentally morbid psychological condition. The clergy who wrote began to pour them out in countless numbers, and preachers thundered them down upon the heads of their terrified congregations with all the additional emphasis of voice and gesture; and, finally, even laymen took them up and put them into verse, adding new horrors from their own fertile imaginations, and producing such

<sup>1</sup> Cf. for example, F. X. Schouppe, *The Dogma of Purgatory, Illustrated from the Lives and Legends of the Saints*. London, 1893.

catalogues of elaborated torment as, for example, the *Vision of Tundale*.

It would therefore not be inappropriate to speak of an "epidemic of visions," and to include the phenomenon under the category of the many nervous diseases which afflicted the Middle Ages: the judgment-day panic, the children's crusades, and that most peculiar psychological phenomenon, especially prevalent in Italy, the epidemic of dancing.<sup>1</sup>

In the face of these evidences of the morbid mental and physical conditions of the Middle Ages, there can be no doubt that trances and syncope, hallucinations, catalepsies, and the whole long catalogue of similar abnormalities, were widely operative among the people. We have the evidence of the visions themselves for it, and the circumstances which attended at least the later visions are of just this character. A man to all outward appearances dies, and, after remaining in a condition of total unconsciousness for a stated time, suddenly comes to life again, and relates what he has seen during his trance. What is more natural than to suppose that the soul had, by a special dispensation of providence, been separated from the body during that time?

From a pathological point of view, the circumstances are not at all surprising. It is quite natural that a person who has reduced his vitality to its lowest ebb by continual privation and exposure, and whose religious fanaticism borders upon lunacy, should be subject to periods of ecstasy; and that he should, upon returning to a comparatively normal state, imagine that he had actually seen things which for years he had constantly been picturing to himself in imagination. Nor would he experience the slightest difficulty in convincing his hearers of the truth of his statements, and thus the marvelous story would spread.

The extent of the influence of the visions upon the mental life of the times must not be underrated. They were undoubtedly a powerful factor in establishing for religion the undisputed supremacy which it possessed over the minds of men in the Middle Ages. They formed, as could nothing else, a link between this world and the next, and seemed to solve in a way which

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Hecker-Hirsch, *Volkskrankheiten d. Mittelalters*, p. 124f.

left no room for doubt the greatest questions which theology or philosophy could propound.

The story of the torments of hell and of purgatory, and of the joys of heaven, found its highest and practically its final literary expression in the *Divina Commedia* of Dante. The great chaotic mass of materials, much of it inherited from the East, but more sprung from the extraordinarily fertile imaginations of the medieval clergy, yielded readily to the touch of genius, and was sifted, remodelled, and moulded into a poetic whole by Dante's wonderful art. All prior efforts to create a poetic hell fade into obscurity when placed in the dazzling light of this great work; but for the student of literary history these lesser productions are perhaps more valuable, since they portray more exactly the real mental life of the times. In Dante's work, political rather than religious, and above all artistic, hell and its torments are but a vehicle for individual opinion, and not the all-important theme. Nevertheless the *Divina Commedia*, owing to its exalted literary position, and to the immense amount of critical analysis to which it has been submitted, has been the natural starting-point for investigations like the present. Dante-scholars were very slow to discover that their author had not invented his whole work, but had culled from an almost inexhaustible stock of materials. And even when they had discovered this, they were unwilling to believe it, or lacked the courage to pry more deeply into the unknown field. But scientific research will not be gainsaid, and during the course of the present century it has been conclusively shown that Dante merely appropriated the many legends of heaven and hell which were then universally known (especially those in the form of VISIONS), and choosing such of them as best suited his purpose, gave them definite and immortal expression.

This admission does not in the least detract from the glory of Dante's achievement. As M. Ampère says, "these visions gave to Dante not his genius, not his poetic inspiration, but the form merely in which he realized it. They must not, however, be passed by. Genius should not be a descendant who scorns his humble ancestors; it should be like a reverent son who, having

obtained power and glory, does not despise his humble parents, who are without fame."<sup>1</sup>

The question of the originality of Dante's work began to be agitated perhaps a century and a half ago, but always in a half-hearted, apologetic sort of way which was necessarily fatal to the cause. It was not until the beginning of the nineteenth century that the matter began to be considered in all seriousness. The following bibliography, while by no means exhaustive, will serve to indicate the principal steps in the development of the question.

The first real impulse to a more objective and searching study of Dante's work was given by F. Cancellieri's *Osservazioni intorno alla Questione . . . sopra la Originalità del Poema di Dante*, published in Rome in 1814. An entertaining review of this work in the *Edinburgh Review*, Vol. XXX, p. 317 f., 1818, will serve to make us acquainted with the contents of Cancellieri's essay, which is rare, and at the same time will give us an insight into the condition of the question at that time.

"(We have) just received," says the reviewer, "a work almost unknown in England, having for its object to ascertain whether (Dante) was an inventor or an imitator only. The continental antiquaries and scholars have eagerly laid hold of a manuscript (the *Vision of Alberic*), said to have been discovered about the beginning of the present century, and affording evidence, according to some persons, that he had borrowed from others the whole plan and conception of his wonderful work. The question, indeed, is of ancient date, and long before such value had been set upon this manuscript, was so perplexed and prolonged as now to call for definitive elucidation."

Concerning the discovery, or rather the re-discovery, of the Alberic vision, he says: "An extract, or rather a short abstract of an old vision, written in Latin, appeared in a pamphlet published in Rome in 1801, with an insinuation that the primitive model of Dante's poem had at length been discovered. Some reader of new publications transmitted the intelligence of the discovery to a German journalist, who received it as of the utmost importance; and from him a writer in a French paper (the *Publiciste* of July, 1809), transcribed, embellished, and diffused it

<sup>1</sup>*Hist. Litt. de la France*, II, p. 134 f.

over all Europe. Having nothing to do with politics, everybody received it upon the faith of the author of the pamphlet, by whom alone the MS. had been read; and it was immediately settled by the wits and critics of the day, that Dante was but the versifier of the ideas of others. Mr. Cancellieri, a professed black-letter scholar, and animated, no doubt, with a laudable zeal for religion as well as for literature, published the vision entire in 1814. . . .”

The writer then points out the unjustness of an attempt to account for Dante's work on the basis of one short vision, and intimates the existence of any number of similar works in the Middle Ages.

But the old school of idolaters died hard, and it was not until almost thirty years later that this matter became settled beyond all reasonable question. During these thirty years Ozanam, to be sure, had on several occasions hinted at the existence of a vast well from which Dante obviously drew; but his remarks were, in the main, sporadic and incidental, and, therefore, were not accorded the reverent consideration which this distinguished scholar's work had usually received.

But in 1842, M. Charles Labitte published in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* of that year, p. 704 f., his essay, entitled, *La Divine Comédie avant Dante*. It is a thorough study of other-world visions in classical antiquity and in Christian times. In his introductory remarks Labitte says: “(*The Divine Comedy*), as a matter of fact, original and bizarre though it may appear, is not a spontaneous creation, the sublime caprice of a divinely-gifted artist. On the contrary, it harks back to a whole cycle which preceded it; to a permanent thought which reappears periodically in the ages which go before;—a thought at first shapeless, developing little by little, until finally a man of genius possesses himself of it, and gives it a fixed and definite form in a masterpiece.”

In 1844 a similar and perhaps even more erudite work on the subject of other-world visions appeared in London: Thomas Wright's *St. Patrick's Purgatory: An Essay on the Legends of Purgatory, Hell, and Paradise*. Wright does not consider these visions in their possible relation to Dante at all, but naturally



follows lines similar to those laid down by Labitte, though the two works were written quite independently of each other. Wright, too, treats far more fully than did his predecessor the other-world legends of Ireland, a country singularly rich in this particular branch of literature.

Emboldened by these practically pioneer essays (for the work of Cancellieri, and the slight contribution in the *Edinburgh Review*, were as well as forgotten), Ozanam incorporated the results of his own investigations in an essay, which appeared in 1845, entitled, *Études sur les Sources Poétiques de la Divine Comédie*.<sup>1</sup> Ozanam, while repeating much of what Labitte had given us, adds valuable new material, especially from Italian literature, and the essay is a decided advance upon all previous works on the subject.

The works of both Labitte and Ozanam are reviewed briefly, and not very ably, in the *North American Review* for January, 1847.

In 1851 Tischendorf published a valuable essay in *Theologische Studien und Kritiken*, 24, chiefly in reference to the *Vision of St. Paul* and other similar apocryphal works.<sup>2</sup>

In 1865 there is a slight contribution from Albana Megnaty, entitled, *An Historical Sketch of the Life and Times of Dante Alighieri, with an Outline of the Legendary History of Hell, Purgatory and Paradise Previous to the Divina Commedia*.

Late in the '60's Ozanam again appears with a whole volume on the subject—containing, to be sure, much material not directly connected—entitled, *La Poésie Catholique au XIII<sup>e</sup> Siècle*.<sup>3</sup> On p. 473 of this work he edits a thirteenth century French version of the *Vision of St. Paul*, and points out for the first time its resemblance in general tone, and in much of the detail, to the *Divina Commedia*.

In 1874 Alessandro d'Ancona published a work entitled, *I Precursori di Dante*, to which I have not had access.

In 1876 Octave Delepierre published a treatise rather elaborately, entitled, *L'Enfer; Essai Philosophique et Historique sur les Legendes de la Vie Future* (London, Truebner). The work is modelled in method upon Wright's book, and is not a masterly

<sup>1</sup> Republished in Vol. V, p. 378 f., of the complete ed. of Ozanam's works, 1872.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. also his *Apocall. Apocr.*, XIV-XVIII; 34-69.

<sup>3</sup> Sixth ed., 1872, Vol. 6.

performance—at least, it presents but little new material. Great stress is laid upon the similarity in form and execution between Dante's work and the *Vision of Tundale*, though the author disclaims any imitation on the part of the Italian poet. The essay was twice published; the second time under the title of *Le Livre des Visions*, illustrated, and limited to twenty-five copies.

In 1892 the fragment of the *Apocalypse of Peter* was discovered, and published with a translation and an introductory essay by Mr. Montague Rhodes James. This work will be treated in detail later on.

The latest work in the field of vision-literature in general has appeared in recent issues of *Romanische Forschungen*. In Vol. II (1886), C. Fritzsche published an article, *Die Lateinischen Visionen des Mittelalters bis zur Mitte des XIIten Jahrhunderts*, concluded in Vol. III. It consists, as its title implies, of a catalogue of medieval Latin visions, arranged in chronological order. A short explanatory essay is appended. In Vol. V, p. 539, there is an interesting study by L. Schermann, to which reference will again be made later, entitled, *Eine Art Visionärer Höllenschilderung aus dem Indischen Mittelalter*. This article, much amplified, was separately published, under the title, *Materialien zur Geschichte der Indischen Visionslitteratur*, in Leipzig, 1892.

In Vol. VIII, E. Peters, *Zur Geschichte der Lateinischen Visionslegenden*, supplements Fritzsche's work.

## I. SOURCES AND GENERAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE VISIONS.

### 1. ORIENTAL ANALOGUES.

It is not within the scope of the present study to review, even briefly, the various doctrines concerning a future life which are advanced in the different Oriental theogonies. But no survey of the history of visions would be complete without an indication, at least, of the most striking parallels between the pagan and Christian accounts. In almost every case the former can claim chronological priority, and may therefore be considered the first step in the chain of vision-development.

Upham, in his *History of Buddhism*,<sup>1</sup> was at some pains to point out the resemblance between many of the torments of the Buddhist hells and of the *Divina Commedia*. And it is in these accounts that we find the most striking analogues to the incidents of the Christian visions. The chief lines of similarity may be briefly indicated.

The number of hells varies in Buddhistic accounts, but the favorite figure is 136: 8 principal and 128 subordinate hells.<sup>2</sup> The torments are, of course, not the same in all accounts; but the following abstract (in which only the eight principal hells are considered) will serve the present purpose.<sup>3</sup>

The first hell is the place of the damned where they are cut in pieces by several sorts of weapons, and brought to life again. Here they will be torn to pieces by glowing hot irons, and then exposed to intense cold. After a time their limbs will again unite, and again be torn asunder and exposed to the cold; and this alternation of misery will endure for 500 infernal years.

The second hell is the place where the damned are hewn with red-hot axes. On a bed of fire they will be extended, and, like so many trunks of trees, with burning iron saws and hooks they will be cut into eight or ten pieces, for 1,000 infernal years.

The third hell is the place where the dead are squeezed with red-hot iron rocks, which roll from the four sides of hell. They will be ground between four burning mountains for 2,000 infernal years.

The fourth hell is the place where the damned are tormented by the flame having entered into them by the nine openings of their body. They will have their hearts consumed by fire entering their mouths, etc., for 4,000 infernal years.

The fifth hell is the place where the damned undergo great misery; tears red as blood and hot as fire proceed from their eyes for 8,000 infernal years.

The sixth hell is the place where the damned are tormented

<sup>1</sup> P. 104 f.

<sup>2</sup> In the Purāṇas the usual number is seven. In the Garuda-Purāṇa, however, the number is fixed at 8,400,000. Cf. Benfey, *Hermes, Minos, Tartaros*, Abh. der kgl. Gesellsch. der Wiss. zur Göttingen, xxii (1879), p. 36 f.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Upham, *loc. cit.*, p. 108. Also *Asiatic Researches*, VI, 220.

by being fixed on red-hot iron pins, which are fastened to the burning floor. They will be tumbled down headlong from a lofty burning mountain; then, being transfixcd on an iron spit, they will be cut and torn by demons with swords and spears for 16,000 infernal years.

The seventh hell is the place where the damned are placed on red-hot iron rocks, and being unable to stand on them, fall down headlong on the hot iron floor, from which protrude red-hot iron spikes as large as palmeira logs. They will be first fixed with their heads downwards, and then transfixcd with red-hot spits as large as palm trees.

The eighth hell is the place of the damned, who are burned constantly by the fire which proceeds in an immense quantity from every side of that hell, by which fire the extent of 100 yodoons of the hell is filled up. They will be punished for a whole world in the most terrible of all hells, the pavement of which, nine yojanas in thickness, is of red-hot iron, and emits the most horrible smoke and the most piercing flame.

In the first hell we are confronted with two of the most characteristic features of a large number of Christian visions. The fact that the souls, after being torn and mangled beyond possibility of recognition, again take on their original shape, in order to undergo renewed torment, is constantly emphasized in the Christian accounts. Compare, for example, Tundale, who, being delivered by the guiding angel to the fury of the fiends, is hewn into "gobettes smale,"

He myght not dey with that payne,  
For he was made al hole agayne.

—l. 765.<sup>1</sup>

The torment of alternate heat and extreme cold is a well-nigh universal feature throughout the vision-literature. It is interesting to note that we also find it in the Book of Enoch,<sup>2</sup> and it was probably through the medium of this work that the feature found its way into the Christian visions. We find it in the

<sup>1</sup> Wherever it is possible to do so, reference will be made to the *English* versions of the works quoted.

<sup>2</sup> XIV, 11; cf. p. 22, below.

fourth century *Vision of St. Paul*, which had perhaps a greater influence than any other single work upon subsequent similar accounts. In England, Bede introduces the feature into the *Vision of Drihthelm*, whence it was communicated to other specifically English visions. It is a feature of the Anglo-Saxon hell (See below), occurring both in the poetry and in the prose. The homilists almost invariably employ it in general descriptions of hell. Compare, for example, Aelfric: "The eyes will smart with the powerful smoke and the teeth quake with the great chill; for the reprobates shall, suffer intolerable heat, and unspeakable chill."<sup>1</sup> Or again: "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth: for their eyes shall be tormented in the great burning, and their teeth shall afterwards quake in the intense cold."<sup>2</sup>

Examples could be multiplied.<sup>3</sup>

The torment of the second hell—hewing with red-hot axes—would naturally suggest itself to any imaginative torment-deviser, and we therefore find the feature, with various modifications and elaborations, all through vision-literature. It constitutes one of the most horrible episodes of Dante's hell.

For the torment of the third hell, where the souls are squeezed with red-hot iron rocks, there seem to be no exact parallels in Christian accounts. The rocks, to be sure, recall the torture of the prodigal and the avaricious in the *Divina Commedia*, but very distantly. The mention of the "four sides" of hell has probably no special significance, though it recalls vaguely the Anglo-Saxon account of the wind blowing from the "four corners,"<sup>4</sup> and the "four fires" of the *Vision of Furseus*.

The fourth and fifth hells present no points of similarity to the Christian accounts, except in a very general way. Perhaps we have an echo of the fourth—where the flame enters by the nine openings of the body—in the *Apocalypse of Peter*, § 14: "And over against these were again other men and women . . . having flaming fire in their mouth," etc.

The sixth hell seems again to be in organic connection with the Christian accounts. In the *Apocalypse of Peter* we find the

<sup>1</sup> Thorpe, I, 531.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* I, 133.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. e. g. Blickling Homily V; Morris, p. 60. *Poema Morale*, I.

<sup>4</sup> *Crist*, line 878.

following paragraph (15): "And in a certain other place were pebbles sharper than swords or than any spit, red-hot, and women and men, clad in filthy rags, were rolling upon them in torment . . ." The hot iron floor is one of the most elaborate features of the *Vision of Tundale*.<sup>1</sup>

The lofty mountains are a not uncommon feature of Christian accounts. They occur in one or another form in the visions of the Monk of Wenlok, Wettin, Drihthelm, Monk of Eynsham, and others. Souls are hurled from cliffs in the *Apocalypse of Peter* (17): "And there were other men and women being hurled down from a great cliff, and they reached the bottom and again were driven by those that were set upon them to climb up upon the cliff, and thence they were hurled down again, and they had no rest from this torment."

In the *Vision of Alberic* the mountains are of ice.

Impaling is a feature which we should naturally expect to find in any catalogue of physical torments, and its frequent recurrence in the visions is not surprising. In the *Divina Commedia*, Caiaphas is fixed to a cross on the ground.<sup>2</sup>

Placing sinners upon their heads (seventh hell) recalls the pits into which Dante plunges some of his damned headforemost. Dante's immediate source for this feature was probably the *Vision of Alberic*, but the similarity is none the less remarkable, especially as Dante places his pits in the "livid stone," which would seem to be the red-hot rocks of the Buddhistic accounts.<sup>3</sup> See also *St. Patrick's Purgatory* (Sect. 4).<sup>4</sup>

The eighth hell offers no new features. In the *Vision of Tundale*, the iron floor is also assigned a specified thickness.

The foregoing very brief review shows sufficiently clearly that an organic connection exists between the Buddhistic conceptions of hell-torment and the Christian. A perusal of Schermann's article (cited above, page 9) will show that these conceptions developed in the East in just the same manner as in Europe, though not, in the case of the former, generally in the form of

<sup>1</sup>Section 4.

<sup>2</sup>*Inferno*, Canto XIX.

<sup>3</sup>*Inferno*, Canto XXIII.

<sup>4</sup>The Middle-english visions will throughout be referred to by the Sections into which I have divided them in Part III of my study.

visions. In the Brahmanistic *Mārkandeya-Purāṇa*,<sup>1</sup> the earliest work of this nature extant, and which still reflects the earliest conceptions of epic mythology, we find a very similar division of hells. The doctrine of metempsychosis is the basis of the account. In the first hell, called Raurava (= howling), the sinner is forced to run about over glowing coals; in the next, called Mahaurava (= howling loudly), he is bound down upon a floor of burning copper, and is torn to pieces by all sorts of animals. In the third, called Tamas (= darkness), the torments of extreme cold, darkness, hunger, thirst, etc., are inflicted. A driving wind and hail-storm (*cf. Drihthelm*) breaks the bones of the damned, and presses out the marrow and blood. Any number of parallels to this in the Christian accounts will at once suggest themselves. In the next hell, called Nikrintana (= cutting to pieces), souls are fixed upon a constantly rotating disk, and are sawed apart from head to foot by demons with the *kḍlasūtra*, or black thread.<sup>2</sup> (*Cf. the burning wheel of St. Paul's Vision and of St. Patrick's Purgatory.*) In the fifth hell, called Apratishtha (= supportless, immeasurably deep), sinners are fastened to wheels; blood streams from their mouths, tears from their eyes. This torment endures for 1,000 years. The torment of the next hell, Asipatravana (= sword-leaf forest), possesses particular interest for us. In the centre of this hell there is a forest, the leaves of which are sword-blades. Allured by the pleasant appearance and cool shade of this forest, the souls enter to seek relief from their thirst and pain. But the wind drives the sword-leaves down upon them and they sink down upon the flaming ground, where they are attacked and torn to pieces by countless numbers of tiger-like dogs.

The sword-leaves at once recall the burning, sword-leaved trees which guard the entrance to hell, and to which souls are affixed by various portions of the body—a feature peculiar, as far as I know, to the visions of St. Paul and Alberic. In the last hell, Taptakumbha (= provided with glowing caldrons), sinners are hurled headforemost (*cf. 8th Buddhist hell, above*) into jars of boiling oil and iron-dust. Skull and bones burst asunder, the

<sup>1</sup>Schermann, *loc. cit.*, page 544 f. *Materialien, etc.*, p. 33.

<sup>2</sup>Probably not "death-thread." *Cf. Schermann, Materialien, etc.*, p. 36, note.

marrow spurts out, the mangled limbs are devoured by vultures, while the demons stir about with spoons the "liquid" soul. (Compare *Tundale*.)

This account further resembles especially *Tundale* and *St. Patrick's Purgatory*, in that the narrator himself undergoes many of the torments described. We find here also the teaching which plays an important part in the Buddhistic system, as it does especially in the *Avesta*, and, in a less marked degree, in the Old Testament, namely, the division of earthly actions into thought, word, and deed, all of which will be revealed to the great Judge.<sup>1</sup> An especially interesting survival of this is in the Anglo-Saxon poetry, especially *Crist*. Compare, for example, l. 1036 :

Sceal on leoht cuman  
sinra weorca wlite and worda gemynd,  
and heortan gehygd fore heofona cyning.

Or again, *Crist*, 1045 f :

Opene weorþað  
ofer middangeard monna daede.  
Ne magun hord wera heortan geþohtas  
for waldende wihte bemipan.<sup>2</sup>

Another characteristic Christian feature which this account furnishes is that a suitable punishment is meted out for every crime. Thus, birds with beaks of adamant hardness pluck out the eyes of such as had cast lustful glances ; backbiters, slanderers, etc., have their tongues cut with sharp shears (*cf. Apocalypse of Peter*, 14) ; the hands of such as had touched sacred things before purifying them are plunged into pots of fire ; etc.

These examples will suffice to show the relationship which exists between the Indian religions and Christianity in regard to conceptions of hell. A similar result is gained from a comparison of the conceptions of an abode of the blessed. For a study of the development within Buddhism, I again refer to Schermann's article.

<sup>1</sup> Schermann, *loc. cit.*, p. 553. Cf. especially Cowell, "Thought, Word, and Deed," *Journ. of Phil.*, III.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. also Bede, *Vision of Furseus*, *Hist. Eccl.* V, 13.



Turning now to other oriental religions, we find only isolated incidents which have been carried over into the Christian accounts.

The fate of the Egyptian soul after death is briefly as follows: <sup>1</sup>

The soul is led by the god Thoth into Amenthe, the infernal world, the entrance to which lies in the extreme west, on the farther side of the sea, where the sun goes down under the earth. . . . At the entrance <sup>of the</sup> sits a wide-throated monster, over whose head is the inscription, "This is the devourer of many who go into Amenthe, the lacerator of the heart of him who comes with sins to the house of justice." The soul next kneels before the forty-two assessors of Osiris; it then comes to the final trial in the hall of the two Truths, the approving and the condemning. . . . Here the soul is weighed in the balance. In one scale an image of Thmei, the goddess of truth, is placed; in the other a heart-shaped vase, symbolizing the heart of the deceased with all the actions of his earthly life. Thoth notes the result on a tablet, and the deceased advances with it to the foot of the throne on which sits Osiris, lord of the dead, king of Amenthe. He pronounces the decisive sentence, and his assistants see that it is at once executed. The soul, if condemned, is either scourged back to earth straightway, to live again in the form of a vile animal; or it is plunged into a hell of fire; or it is driven into the atmosphere to be tossed about by tempests until its sins be expiated, and another probation granted through a renewed existence in human form.

At least two of the features of this account have crept into the Christian visions—the wide-throated monster and the scales of justice. It is most probable, however, that they came through the medium of the Greek.

In the *Vision of Thurcill* <sup>2</sup> we have, with the substitution of Christian saints for heathen deities, and with the addition of purgatory, a remarkable survival of the Egyptian conception of judgment. In the great judgment-hall to which Thurcill is led by his guide (St. Julian), Sts. Michael, Peter, and Paul sit in judgment upon the souls. In the Egyptian accounts, the three judges are Horus, Anubis, and Thoth. Thoth is also the guide,

<sup>1</sup>Alger, *History of the Doctrine of a Future Life*, p. 102.

<sup>2</sup>Section 6.

here St. Julian. Perfectly white souls are assigned to St. Michael, who sends them unharmed through the flames; spotted souls are sent by Peter to purgatory; whereas Paul and the devil (Osiris in the Egyptian account) sit one at each end of a large pair of scales, in which are weighed the black souls. If the scales turn to the saint, the soul is sent to purgatory; but if to the devil, it is hurled into a fiery pit just at Paul's feet.<sup>1</sup>

The tempests of the Egyptian account recur frequently in the visions.

Turning to the Persian theogony,<sup>2</sup> we find the one feature which links Orient and Occident most unmistakably together—the feature which is still a doctrine in the Mohammedan system—the bridge of judgment. This, more than any other single incident, seems to have struck the popular fancy, and we find it recurring constantly throughout early and medieval Christian literature, not only in the visions, where we should naturally expect to find it, but in the romances as well.<sup>3</sup>

In the *Khordah-Avesta* we find the following brief mention of the bridge: “. . . the wisdom of wisdoms, which effects freedom from hell for the soul at the bridge, and leads it over to that Paradise, the brilliant, the sweet-smelling of the pure.”

The account of the bridge in the *Viraf-Nameh* is as follows: “On the soaring bridge the soul meets Rashnerast, the angel of justice, who tries those that present themselves before him. If the merits prevail, a figure of dazzling substance, radiating glory and fragrance, advances and accosts the justified soul, saying: I am thy good angel; I was pure at the first, but thy good deeds have made me purer; and the happy one is straightway led to Paradise. But when the vices outweigh the virtues, a dark and frightful image, featured with ugliness, and exhaling a noisome smell, meets the condemned soul and cries: I am thy evil spirit; bad myself, thy crimes have made me worse. Then the culprit staggers on

<sup>1</sup>For three-fold division of souls in Anglo-Saxon, etc., cf. II, 3, below.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Huebschmann, “Die persische Lehre vom Jenseits,” etc. *Jahrb. für prot. Theol.* V, p. 48.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Gaston Paris: “Le Conte de la Charrette.” *Romania*, XII, p. 508 f.

his uncertain foothold, is hurled from the dizzy causeway, and precipitated into the gulf which yawns horribly below.<sup>1</sup>

In the visions, the bridge is sometimes one of the torments of hell, at others, "the bridge of purgatory." The first Christian vision in which we find it is that of St. Paul.

The Mohammedan bridge, al Sirat, has precisely the attributes which are usually bestowed upon it in the Christian accounts. It is thinner than a hair, sharper than a razor, and hotter than flame, spanning in one frail arch the immeasurable distance, directly over hell, from earth to paradise. Every orthodox Muslim firmly holds this as a physical fact to be surmounted on the last day. Mohammed leading the way, the faithful and righteous will traverse it with ease, and as quickly as a flash of lightning. The thin edge broadens beneath their steps, the surrounding support of convoying angels' wings hides the fire-lake below from their sight, and they are swiftly enveloped in paradise. But as the infidel with his evil deeds essays to cross, thorns entangle his steps, the lurid glare beneath blinds him, and he soon topples over and whirls into the blazing abyss.

Representative visions in which the bridge figures are: *St. Paul*, fourth century; *Monk of Wenlok*, eighth century; *Tundale*, *Alberic*, twelfth century; *St. Patrick's Purgatory* (where the bridge broadens just as in the Mohammedan account), *Thurcill*, thirteenth century.

In the eighteenth century Persian *Dabistan*,<sup>2</sup> or *School of Manners*, the soul, when upon the bridge of judgment, is enveloped in a fetid mist, from which issues a terrible figure. "Who art thou?" asks the spirit. "I am the personification of thy acts and deeds," answers the apparition. The bridge is sharper than a razor, and the wicked soul, having gone a little way with great difficulty, at last falls into the infernal gulf below.

The *Dabistan* is interesting in many ways from our point of view; and the fact that it was composed in modern times goes to show how strong a hold these popular conceptions of hell have gained. Both in form and in content it is the counterpart of a medieval vision, and I am prompted to close this brief survey of the oriental side of our subject with an abstract of

<sup>1</sup>Alger, *loc. cit.*, p. 136 f.

<sup>2</sup>Translation of Shea and Troyer, p. 293 f.

the section dealing with the pains of hell. The account begins thus: "Ardaiviraf, having drunk a cup of hallowed wine . . . lay down on a couch and did not arise before the expiration of a week; *his spirit*, through the efficacy of the divine word, *having been separated from the body*. On the eighth day, Ardai, arising from sleep, ordered a scribe to be brought, who should commit to writing all his words; and he thus spake: When I fell asleep Sirushi, the *Angel of Paradise*, came near. . . . I explained the motives of my coming to the other world. *He took my hand* and said, Ascend three steps. I obeyed, and arrived at the Chanyud Pul, or the *straight bridge of judgment*. The accompanying angel pointed me out the road, when I beheld *a bridge finer than a hair and sharper than a razor*, and strong, and its length was thirty-seven rasans. . . . I beheld a spirit just parted from the body in a state of tranquillity. On its arrival at the bridge a fragrant gale came from the East, out of which issued a beautiful, nymph-like form, the like of which I never before beheld. The spirit asked her, Who art thou? . . . She replied, I am the personification of thy good deeds. After this the angel, taking me out of paradise, bore me off to behold the punishments inflicted on those in hell."

Then follows a catalogue of thirty-four distinct torments for as many crimes. Close analogues are found in Christian accounts to the following:

1. Black and gloomy river of fetid water, with weeping multitudes falling in and drowning.
2. The bridge of judgment.
3. Road through snow, ice, storms, intense cold, mephitic exhalations and obscurity,<sup>1</sup> along a region full of pits, in which were myriads of spirits suffering tortures.
4. Serpents in the pits.
6. Woman holding in her hand a cup filled with blood and corrupted matter, which she is forced to drink.<sup>2</sup>
10. Woman suspended by her breasts, and noxious creatures falling on her.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. particularly *Vision of Paul*, Sect. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Apocalypse of Peter*, 11.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 9. Also *Paul*, sect. 9.

- 12. Woman hung up by her tongue.<sup>1</sup>
- 14. Men hung up and lashed with gnawing serpents.<sup>2</sup>
- 21. Men tormented by worms and serpents.
- 30. Number of persons up to their necks in snow and ice.<sup>3</sup>

## 2. INFLUENCE OF CLASSICAL ANTIQUITY.

It will be impossible to give in this place a catalogue of the elements which found their way into the visions from the rich mythologies of classical times. For parallels of a general character I refer to the early pages of M. Labitte's essay.<sup>4</sup> It has already been said (p. 16, above), that the Greek was in all probability the medium through which several details of the Egyptian conception of an after-life crept into Christianity; such as, for example, the Cerberus myth, and the scales of justice. The rivers of hell reflect Acheron and Styx; the thread which Ariadne gave to Theseus to guide him through the labyrinth of the Minotaur springs up again in the ninth century *Vision of Charles the Fat*, where, to be sure, it has assumed many distinctly medieval attributes. The "lux atra" of Virgil may be the "black fire" of the Anglo-Saxon hell. Many visions, such as that of Tundale, introduce Greek and Latin proper names. In *St. Patrick's Purgatory*, too, we find classical references.

The more specific points of affinity will be indicated in the course of the study.

Some influence of a very general character may have been exerted upon later descriptions of heaven by Cicero's *Somnium Scipionis*. The visions, however, owe very little to it.

The *Vision of Thespesius*, written at a time when the glory of Rome had already begun to fade, will be discussed in detail in a subsequent section.

<sup>1</sup>*Apocalypse of Peter*, 7, and note.

<sup>2</sup>*Cf.* particularly *Vision of Alberic*.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup>*Cf.* also Nutt, *The Happy Otherworld*, p. 255 f.

### 3. THE OLD TESTAMENT.

Old Testament scriptures furnish no description of a place of punishment sufficiently detailed to warrant bringing it into immediate relation with vision-literature. There can, however, be little doubt that the custom of prophesying and admonishing from a vision basis originated here, and was the direct stimulus for the similar procedure in the Christian accounts. Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Obadiah, and the minor Old Testament visionaries, all contributed something to the result, though probably less than the apocryphal *Book of Enoch*.

The doctrine of a hell of fire is clearly expressed in the Old Testament, Deut., xxxii, 22: "For a fire is kindled in mine anger, and shall burn unto the lowest hell." The "pains of hell" are referred to in Ps. cxvi, 3: "The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell got hold upon me." See also Ps. xvi, 10; lv, 15; cxxxix, 8.

Hell is a pit beneath the earth: Is., xiv, 15: "Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit." Ezek., xxxi, 16: "... when I cast him down to hell with them that descend into the pit." 17: "They also went down into hell . . ." xxxii, 27: "Which are gone down to hell with their weapons of war." Contrasted positions of heaven and hell clearly expressed in Amos, ix, 2: "Though they dig into hell, thence shall mine hand take them; though they climb up to heaven, thence will I bring them down." Hell is deep: Prov., ix, 18: "But he knoweth not that the dead are there, and that her guests are in the depths of hell." Job, xxiv, 19: "Drought and heat consume the snow waters; so doth the grave those which have sinned," has been adduced as evidence of the double torments of heat and cold in purgatory.

The closest analogues to the general form of the Christian visions are Ezek., i-x; Daniel, vii, viii, x. Specific passages will be indicated in the course of the study.

For an exposition of the theory which would derive the Christian hell immediately from the Hellenic one, I refer to Prof. Percy Gardner's essay in the *Contemporary Review*, March, 1895, and to Nutt, *loc. cit.*, where further references will be found.

## 4. THE BOOK OF ENOCH.

[References are to Dr. Richard Laurence's translation of the Ethiopic MS. in the Bodleian Library. Published by Kegan Paul, Trench & Co., 1883].

The date of the *Book of Enoch* is about 110 B. C., though it is impossible to fix an exact date (see the Introduction to Laurence's translation). The work was probably well-known in early Christian times, and was possibly the channel through which several Oriental conceptions of hell crept into Christian accounts.<sup>1</sup> The following extracts have immediate bearing upon our subject. The special points of connection are in italics.

XIV, 8. A vision thus appeared to me. 9. . . . *Winds* in the vision assisted my flight. 10. They *elevated me aloft to heaven.* I proceeded until I arrived at a wall built with stones of crystal.<sup>2</sup> 11. . . . A spacious habitation, built also with stones of crystal. . . . Cherubim of fire in a stormy sky.<sup>3</sup> . . . When I entered into this dwelling it was *hot as fire and cold as ice.*<sup>4</sup> No trace of delight or of life was there. Terror overwhelmed me, and a fearful shaking seized me. 13. Violently agitated and trembling, I fell upon my face.<sup>5</sup> . . . 14. There was another habitation more spacious than the former. . . . 15. So greatly did it excel in all points, in glory, in magnificence, and in magnitude, that *it is impossible to describe to you either the extent or the splendor of it.*<sup>6</sup> 16. *Its floor was on fire*<sup>7</sup> . . . there was an exalted throne . . . and there was the voice of cherubim. 19. From underneath this mighty throne *rivers of flaming fire*<sup>8</sup> issued. . . .

XV, XVI. [The Lord tells Enoch what he is to preach to the people.]<sup>9</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The influence of *Enoch* on the Christian conceptions of heaven was certainly very great, but cannot be traced in detail here.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Monk of Eynsham*, sect. 8.

<sup>3</sup> *Thespesius*; *Ezek.*, I, 13 f.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. p. 11, above.

<sup>5</sup> *Inferno*, v, 142.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. *Apocalypse of Peter*, 5.

<sup>7</sup> *Buddhist Hells*, 6-8, p. 10 f., above. Also *Tundale*, sect. 4.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. *Apocalypse of Peter*, 8.

<sup>9</sup> Visionaries are customarily told by their guides to preach what they have seen for the benefit of mankind. Even Dante:

. . . . e quel che vedi  
Ritornato di là, fa che tu scrive.

XVII, 2. They carried me to a lofty spot, to a *mountain*,<sup>1</sup> the top of which reached to heaven. 4. I came to a *river of fire, which flowed like water*.

XVIII, 2. I surveyed the stone which supports the corners of the earth, and the firmament of heaven. I also beheld the *four winds*<sup>2</sup> which bear up the earth, and the firmament. . . . 13. And in the *columns of heaven* I beheld fires<sup>3</sup> which descended without number.

XXI, 3. . . . I beheld seven stars of heaven *bound . . . together*,<sup>4</sup> like great mountains, and like a blazing fire. I exclaimed, For what species of crime have they been removed to this place? Then Uriel, one of the holy angels who was with me, and who conducted me,<sup>5</sup> answered. . . . These are those of the stars which have transgressed the commandment of the most high God, and are here bound until the infinite number of the days of their crimes be completed. 4. From thence I afterwards passed to another terrific place, 5. where I beheld the operation of a great fire blazing and glittering, in the midst of which there was a division.<sup>6</sup> *Columns of fire* struggled to the end of the abyss, and deep was their descent. But neither its measure nor its magnitude was I able to discover.<sup>7</sup> . . . Then I exclaimed, How terrible is this place, and how difficult to explore! 6. Uriel . . . said, This is the prison of the angels, and here they are kept forever.

XXII, 1. From thence I proceeded to another spot, where I saw on the west a *great and lofty mountain*, a strong rock, and *four* delightful places. 2. Internally it was deep, capacious and very smooth. 3. . . . Here will be collected all the souls of men, 4. . . . until the day of judgment. 9. At that time, therefore, I inquired . . . respecting the general judgment, saying, Why is one separated from another? He answered, *Three sepa-*

<sup>1</sup> For occurrence of mountains in visions, cf. p. 41, below.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. A. S. Crist, line 878. Also p. 12, above.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Tundale, section 12.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Apocalypse of Peter, 9.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Furseus.

<sup>7</sup> The size of hell was a favorite subject for speculation among the vision-writers. Such vague phrases as "as deep as the distance from heaven to earth," etc., are employed most frequently. The Anglo-Saxon poem, *Crist and Satan*, l. 721, represents it as 100,000 miles in extent from top to bottom.



rations<sup>1</sup> have been made between the spirits of the dead, and thus have the spirits of the righteous been separated. 10. Namely, by a chasm, by water, and by light above it.

XXIV, 1. I went to another place, and saw a *mountain of fire*<sup>2</sup> flashing both by day and by night. I proceeded towards it and perceived seven splendid mountains, 2. . . . and odoriferous trees surrounded them. 3. Among these there was a *tree of an unceasing smell*, . . . its leaf, its flower and its bark never withered, and its fruit was beautiful.<sup>3</sup> The fruit of this tree shall be given to the elect (after the final judgment).

XXV, 1. I saw a holy mountain. . . . 3. Deep, dry valleys. . . .

XXVI, 2. Here shall be collected all who utter unbecoming language against God.

XXVII, 1. From thence I proceeded towards the East.<sup>4</sup>

[XXXIX, 4f. Vision of the sainted in paradise].

LII, 1. Then I looked and turned myself to another part of the earth, where I beheld a *deep valley*<sup>5</sup> *burning with fire*. 2. To this valley they brought monarchs and the mighty.

LXVI, 4. . . . There were mountains of gold and silver, of iron, of *fluid metal*, and of tin. 6. . . . From the *fluid mass of fire* there arose a strong smell of *sulphur*, which became mixed with the waters; and the valley of the angels who had been guilty of seduction burned *underneath its soil*.<sup>6</sup> 7. Through that valley, also, *rivers of fire* were flowing. 13. . . . When the angels shall be judged, then shall the heat of these springs of water experience an alternation. 14. And when the angels shall ascend, the water of the springs shall again undergo a change, and be frozen.

LXX, 1. I beheld the sons of the holy angels treading on flaming fire, *whose garments and robes were white*,<sup>7</sup> and whose

<sup>1</sup> Three-fold divisions of souls at the judgment day in *Theopetius*, A. S. *Elene* (cf. II, 3, below). *Thurcill*, sect. 6.      <sup>2</sup> *Drihthelm*.

<sup>3</sup> This particularly pleasant tree recurs in almost all Christian accounts of paradise. It would seem in some way to connect these stories with the holy rood legend. Indeed, in *Thurcill* we find Adam lying beneath the tree.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *Apocalypse of Peter*, 3. Also *Drihthelm*.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. *Tundale*, sect. 4.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. *St. Patrick's Purgatory*, sect. 9.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. *Apocalypse of Peter*, 3.

countenances were transparent as crystal. 2. I saw two rivers of fire glittering like hyacinth. 7. There I beheld, in the midst of that light, a building raised with stones of ice; 8. and in the midst of these stones tongues of living fire.

[LXXVII, 4 f. Vision of judgment].

[LXXXIV, f. Vision of creation, deluge, etc.]

[XC, 4 f. Prophecy and description of judgment].

XCVI, 11. With disgrace, with slaughter, and in extreme penury shall their spirits (*i. e.*, of the rich) be thrust into a furnace of fire.

XCIX, 5. Woe to you, ye sinners, when you shall be afflicted on account of the righteous in the day of great trouble, shall be burnt in the fire, and recompensed according to your deeds.<sup>1</sup>

The points of resemblance between the *Book of Enoch* and the *Apocalypse of Peter* will be further pointed out in the treatment of that work. Other possible borrowings will be indicated as occasion requires.

## 5. THE NEW TESTAMENT.

Christian writers would naturally make the Gospels the basis for their descriptions of hell as of everything else; and it is only to be expected that we should find the sporadic intimations, which we find there, incorporated in almost all subsequent accounts. But the New Testament, though somewhat more explicit in this particular than the Old, offers but few details of the torments of hell.

Fire is, of course, the principal torment of the Christian hell, as contrasted with the cold and gloom of Germanic mythology.<sup>2</sup> Compare Matt., v, 22: "But whoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire." Mark, ix, 43 f: "Into the fire that never shall be quenched." Matt., xiii, 42, 50: "And shall cast them into a furnace of fire." Matt., xviii, 8: "To be cast into everlasting fire." Matt., xviii, 9: "To be cast into hell fire." Matt., xxv, 41: "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire," etc. Revelation is the main scriptural source from which

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Apocalypse of Peter*, 7.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. the Anglo-Saxon hell, II, 2 (a), below.

vision-writers drew, being itself a vision, and reflecting Old Testament visions, especially those of Moses, Ezekiel and Daniel. Hell is a "bottomless pit," ix, 1; a "prison for the damned," ii, 10; the chief torment is fire: "He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone," xiv, 10. The "lake of fire," so common a feature in the visions,<sup>1</sup> is three times mentioned: "Cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone," xix, 20; "and death and hell were cast into a lake of fire," xx, 14; "and whatsoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire," xx, 15. The conception of the devil, and later of hell itself as a dragon or serpent, probably has its first definite expression in xx, 2: "The dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan."

The doctrine of the purging quality of the judgment-day fire is clearly brought out in I Cor., iii, 12-15. 15: "If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire." This is the closest approach to a doctrine of purgatory. The same thing holds for Anglo-Saxon. (Compare the discussion below.)

## 6. THE GOSPEL OF NICODEMUS.

The Gospel of Nicodemus requires mention in our connection, not because it presents any particular points of affinity with the visions, but because, owing to its great popularity throughout the Middle Ages, and the manifold re-handlings which it underwent, it can hardly have failed to have exerted an indirect influence upon them. But a passing notice is all that can be bestowed upon it here. For a study of the diffusion and development of the work in Europe, see R. P. Wuelker's essay, *Das Evangelium Nikodemi in der abendländischen Litteratur*, Paderborn, 1873.

The Old English version of the Gospel has recently been edited by W. H. Hulme, in the *Publications of the Modern Language Association*, xiii, 4.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Apocalypse of Peter*, 8.

# 7. THE VISION OF THESPESIUS.

The *Vision of Thespesius*, recounted by Plutarch,<sup>1</sup> is deserving of more than passing notice from our point of view. Written by a non-Christian author, within our era, it anticipates, in a remarkable way, both the form and the content of the medieval Christian visions. Its features recur unmistakably in later accounts; and as Plutarch was well known to medieval writers, it is reasonable to suppose that there was frequently direct copying from him. It therefore seems necessary to look upon Plutarch as another link in the chain of vision-development.

The following is a brief abstract of the vision of Thespesius:

Thespesius had all his life had dissolute and most ungodly habits. One day he fell headforemost from a high place, and, to all appearances, died, and three days later was carried forth to be buried. But suddenly he revived, and ever after led a life of the most irreproachable virtue. When pressed to tell the cause of this very remarkable change, he related the following vision: When his spirit first left his body, he saw nothing but a few immense stars, infinitely far apart, and casting a most brilliant radiance. Being borne along by an irresistible force, he saw the souls of those departed from life rising up in the form of fiery bubbles, which, bursting asunder, disclosed men and women within them.<sup>2</sup> Some of these ascended immediately and with astounding rapidity. Others, however, swayed about uncertainly, now rising, now falling, in great confusion. Thespesius, recognizing some of these, approaches in order to speak with them; the souls, however, pay no heed to him, but cling to each other in pairs,<sup>3</sup> and thus linked, they continue their aimless flight, amidst terrible lamentations.<sup>4</sup> Still others were in the uppermost regions of the air, seemingly happy, and keeping carefully aloof from the disorderly throng below. By one of these Thespesius is told that he (Thespesius) is not yet dead, but has come hither with the "intellectual part of his soul,"

<sup>1</sup> In his moral essay, *De Tard. Just. Div.*, Goodwin's transl., Vol. IV, p. 177.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Driethelm*.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *Apocalypse of Peter*, 9.

<sup>4</sup> This is a most striking forerunner of Dante's "bufera infernal," *Inf.*, v, l. 31 f. Cf. also visions of the *Monk of Eynsham*, and *Thurcill*.

the dead casting no shadow, nor winking or opening the eyes.<sup>1</sup> Thus encouraged, Thespesius looks more closely, and observes that some of the souls shine with a pure, unclouded light; others have scale-like spots upon them, whereas still others are entirely covered with them.<sup>2</sup> Those whose sins are light need undergo but a short punishment;<sup>3</sup> "but if the cure of impiety require a greater labor, the Deity delivers them to Justice (Dis).<sup>4</sup> But when Justice has given them over as altogether incurable, then Erinnys (the Fury) takes them in hand; and after she has chased them and coursed them from one place to another,<sup>5</sup> flying, yet not knowing where to fly, for shelter or relief, plagued and tormented with a thousand miseries, she plunges them headlong into an invisible abyss, the hideousness of which no tongue can tell."<sup>6</sup> After explaining to him the significance of the various colors in which the souls are clad,<sup>7</sup> the spirit carries Thespesius to a spacious place, in which was a vast, gaping chasm. Here Thespesius is suddenly deserted by his guide,<sup>8</sup> and perceives other souls in the same condition as himself, who keep flying round and round the chasm like birds. Within, the chasm was filled with flowers and fragrance, and the souls soon became dissolved in rapture, and gave themselves over to joy.<sup>9</sup> Soon after, Thespesius is led away to look upon the torments of the damned. He first sees his own father, terribly gashed and wounded, who confesses that he had poisoned some of his guests for their gold.<sup>10</sup> Some souls had their entrails torn out; others were flayed, while still others, linked together in groups of two's and three's, gnawed and devoured each other.<sup>11</sup> He next saw certain lakes,<sup>12</sup> one of

<sup>1</sup> This test also occurs in Dante.

<sup>2</sup> Enoch, A. S. Elene, *Monk of Eynsham*, *Thurcill*. Cf. p. 32, below.

<sup>3</sup> Purgatory of Christian accounts.

<sup>4</sup> Dante: *la città di Dite*, *Inf.*, VIII.

<sup>5</sup> Alberic, Dante, *Monk of Eynsham*. Cf. p. 46 f., below.

<sup>6</sup> *Thurcill*, sect. 6. Also Enoch, XXI, 5; p. 23, above.

<sup>7</sup> *St. Patrick's Purgatory*, sect. 11.

<sup>8</sup> *Drihthelm*; *Tundale*, sect. 3.

<sup>9</sup> This recalls the earthly paradise of the Christian accounts.

<sup>10</sup> In the later visions, it is a common thing for the visionary to have an interview with some close relative in torment.

<sup>11</sup> Buddhist accounts; Alberic, Dante. Cf. p. 43, below. *Apoc. of Peter*, 19.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. *Apocalypse of Peter*, 8.

boiling gold, another of lead, exceedingly cold,<sup>1</sup> and a third of iron, which was very scaly and rugged.<sup>2</sup> "By the sides of these lakes stood certain demons, that, with their instruments, like smiths or founders,<sup>3</sup> put in or drew out the souls of such as had transgressed through avarice, etc. For the flame of the golden furnace having rendered these souls of a fiery and transparent color, they plunged them into that of lead, where, after they were congealed and hardened into a substance like hail, they were again thrown into the lake of iron, where they became black and deformed, and being broken and crumbled by the roughness of the iron, changed their form; and being thus transformed, they were again thrown into the lake of gold, in all these transmutations enduring most dreadful and horrid torments.<sup>4</sup> Those who suffered most were such for whose transgressions their children or posterity suffered. These were constantly rebuked and reviled by the souls of their offspring.<sup>5</sup> The last things that he saw were the souls of such as were designed for a second life. These were bowed, bent, and transformed into all sorts of creatures by the force of tools and anvils, and the strength of workmen appointed for that purpose, that laid on without mercy, bruising the whole limbs of some, disjoining others and pounding some to powder," etc.<sup>6</sup>

Thespesius shortly after returns to his body.

## 8. THE APOCALYPSE OF PETER.

One of the most interesting of the many recent discoveries, in Egypt, of manuscripts pertaining to the New Testament was that, in the spring of 1892, of a small roll containing fragments of the *Book of Enoch*, the *Gospel of Peter*, and the *Apocalypse of Peter*. The Gospel and the Enoch fragment are aside from our subject, but the Apocalypse is of vital importance in the study of visions.

<sup>1</sup> *Enoch*, Buddhist hells and often. Cf. p. 11, above.

<sup>2</sup> *Enoch*, LXVI, 4.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *Tundale*, sect. 11. *Thurcill*, sect. 8 (a).

<sup>4</sup> This whole incident has a close parallel in *Tundale*, sect. 4.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. *Apocalypse of Peter*, 11.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. again *Tundale*.

Mr. M. R. James,<sup>1</sup> one of the first editors of the work, has, from external evidence, proved the Apocalypse to be a work of the latter part of the first century of our era. This makes it the earliest Christian vision which we possess—except, of course, that of St. John.

For a review of the earliest literary notices of the book, and for an estimate of its value, as a theological document, the reader is referred to Mr. James's essay.<sup>2</sup> The editor has also made a study of the work in its relation to a number of similar subsequent works, such as the *Testament of Our Lord* (p. 54), the *Vision of Josaphat* (p. 58),<sup>3</sup> the *Vision of Saturus* (p. 60), the *Sibylline Oracles* (p. 61), the *Vision of St. Paul* (p. 65), etc. In the following pages the work will be examined more fully in its relation to the remaining vision-literature, with a view to ascertaining just how far-reaching its influence was in this particular field. As the Apocalypse is short, I have decided to reproduce it in full, and to embody my notes in the form of a running commentary upon the sections. I shall refer only to the most prominent and representative visions: those, that is, to which most of the countless smaller works can be traced. They are: *Thespesius*, first century; *St. Paul*, fourth century;<sup>4</sup> *Furseus*, *Drihthelm*, seventh century; *Monk of Wenlok*, eighth century; *Wettin*, *St. Ansgar*, *Charles the Fat*, ninth century; *Alberic*, *Tundale*, *St. Patrick's Purgatory*, *Monk of Eynsham*, twelfth century; *Thurcill*, thirteenth century; *Lazarus*, fifteenth century. Of these, all are Christian except *Thespesius*. *Furseus*, *Drihthelm*, *St. Patrick's Purgatory*, *Tundale*, *Monk of Eynsham* and *Thurcill* belong to England or Ireland, although the last four were also well known on the continent. *St. Paul* was familiar to Englishmen in several popular versions. *Lazarus* is a good representative of the latest visions, in most of which, as in this case, the pains of hell—usually eleven, sometimes nine,<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Gospel According to Peter and the Revelation of Peter: Two Lectures*, by J. Armitage Robinson, B. D., and Montague Rhodes James, M. A. London, 1892.

<sup>2</sup> P. 39 f.

<sup>3</sup> In the *History of Barlaam and Josaphat*: Boissonade, *Anecdota Graeca*, iv, pp. 280, 360.

<sup>4</sup> This vision, however, belongs in its more expanded form to the ninth century.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. *Cursor Mundi*, ed. Morris, III, p. 1327.

in number—have been displaced by the more specific torments for the seven deadly sins.

I shall employ Mr. James's division of the Apocalypse into sections. Section 1 does not concern us, but I adduce it for the sake of completeness.

1. Many of them will be false prophets, and will teach ways and various doctrines of perdition: and they will be sons of perdition. And then will God come unto my faithful ones that are hungering and thirsting and suffering oppression, and proving their own souls in this life; and He will judge the sons of lawlessness.

2. And the Lord said furthermore, "Let us go unto the mountain and pray." And as we twelve disciples went with Him, we besought Him that He would show us one of our righteous brethren that had departed from the world, that we might see of what form they were, and so take courage, and encourage them also that should hear us.

This paragraph brings us at once into the atmosphere of the later visions. The *Guide*, so common a feature in subsequent accounts, is in this case Christ himself. This conception of a guide—now a guardian angel, again a purely arbitrary personage—is possibly of Oriental origin.<sup>1</sup>

The belief in a guardian angel, who watched each individual through life, was general during the Middle Ages.<sup>2</sup> The idea of the good and bad angel, who together watch over a mortal, may have developed out of this, or it may have been brought from Persia, together with the bridge of judgment.

This paragraph also fixes the time of the action of the vision. It is the only account which we possess which falls within the lifetime of Christ. Whether it was really written when it purports to have been, we are of course unable to decide. It is very unlikely that Peter himself was the writer. But it differs radically from the Pauline vision in point of face-evidence as to time. In the latter, though Paul himself is said to be the writer, the time of action is not within the lifetime of Christ, as the appeal of Paul and Michael attests.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 16, above (Egyptian judgment).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. T. Wright, *St. Patrick's Purgatory*, etc., p. 33, note.



3. And as we were praying, there suddenly appeared two men standing before the Lord toward the East,<sup>1</sup> whom we could not look upon: for there came from their countenance a ray as of the sun, and all their raiment was light, such as never eye of man beheld, nor mouth can describe, nor heart conceive the glory wherewith they were clad, and the beauty of their countenance.

"All their raiment was light," etc. Angels, and the blessed in general, are almost invariably represented as clad in garments of shining white. These betoken joy, so Gregory tells us.<sup>2</sup>

In the visions, the outward appearance of souls is often taken for an index of the degree of virtue which they possess. Just as the virtuous and blessed are clad in garments of spotless white, so the damned are robed in darkness. (Compare Sects. 6, 15, below.) In *St. Paul* we have the characteristic black-clothed damsels.<sup>3</sup> In *Thurcill* perfectly white souls are sent to heaven, spotted souls to purgatory,<sup>4</sup> while the black souls are sent to purgatory or to hell as the balance of judgment decrees. The same feature, it will be remembered, occurs in *Thespesius*.<sup>5</sup> In the *Voyage of Maelduin*, and in similar works modelled upon it, the travellers find dark-robed men on the fifteenth island.

"Such as never eye beheld," etc. This is, no doubt, a paraphrase of II Cor., XII, 4: How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, etc. The thought recurs frequently in the visions, in connection with both heaven and hell. Compare also *Be Domes Dæge*:

þa oferswiþað sefan and spræce  
 manna gehwylces for micelnesse  
 nænig spræc mæg beon spellum areccan  
 enigum on eorþan earmlice witu.

—l. 184 f.

*St. Paul*, Jesus Coll. MS., l. 263 f. has the following:

Hit is iwriten on the bok  
 For witenesse ther-of ich tok,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Enoch*, xxvii, 1. Also *Drihtelm*, *Monk of Eynsham*.

<sup>2</sup> Homily xxix: "In albis vestibus gaudium et solemnitas mentis ostenditur." Cf. A. S. *Orist*, l. 448 f. *Daniel*, vii, 9.

<sup>3</sup> Sect. 9.

<sup>4</sup> Spot and sin early became synonymous terms. Cf. A. S. *womm*; lat. *maculare*.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. p. 28, above. *Thespesius* also differentiates souls by colors; p. 28, above. Also *St. Patrick's Purgatory*, sect. 11.

Theyh on hundred heueden iseten  
Seoththe Kaym was bi-yeten;  
And nyht and day heueden iwaked  
And teth and tunge of stel imaked,  
And tolden of helle pyne o;  
Yet ther beoth a thusend mo.

3. (Cont'd). And when we saw them we were amazed: for their bodies were whiter than any snow, and redder than any rose, and the red thereof was mingled with the white, and, in a word, I cannot describe the beauty of them: for their hair was thick and curling and bright, and beautiful upon their face and shoulders, like a wreath woven of spikenard and bright flowers, or like a rainbow in the sky, such was their beauty.

4. When, therefore, we saw their beauty, we were all amazement at them, for they had appeared suddenly: and I came near to the Lord and said, "Who are these?" He saith to me: "These are your brethren, the righteous, whose forms ye wished to behold." And I said to Him: "And where are all the righteous, or of what sort is the world wherein they are, and possess this glory?"

The dialogue form between the visionary and his guide has been employed by almost all subsequent recounters, inclusive of Dante.

5. And the Lord showed me a very great space outside this world, shining excessively with light, and the air that was there illuminated with the rays of the sun, and the earth itself blooming with unfading flowers, and full of spices and fair-flowering plants, incorruptible and bearing a blessed fruit: and so strong was the perfume that it was borne even to us from thence. And the dwellers in that place were clad in the raiment of the angels of light, and their raiment was like their land: and angels ran about them there. And the glory of the dwellers there was equal, and with one voice they praised the Lord God, rejoicing in that place. The Lord saith unto us: "This is the place of your brethren, the righteous men."

We have here an orthodox, though very brief, description of the abode of the blessed—a place of purely sensuous delights. The model for all such descriptions was probably the *Book of Enoch*. The elaborate accounts of a happy otherworld which we find especially in the mythical voyages constitute a different

chapter of research.<sup>1</sup> In the visions, the description of heaven became ever more and more subordinated to that of the torments of hell, until we often find accounts in which heaven is not mentioned at all.<sup>2</sup> This is very natural. The description of heaven did not allow as free play to the imaginative and inventive faculties as did that of hell, nor did it serve the end in view as well. The fear of future torment was ever more efficacious in restraining from sin than was the hope of future bliss. This bliss, as has been said, consisted, in the minds of the visionaries, of purely sensuous delights: limitless space, excessive light and fragrance, incorruptible flowers and fruits. The more exalted and spiritual enjoyments were generally not dwelt upon: the clergy probably realized that they would not appeal to the popular understanding.

A striking exception to this general rule is the *Vision of Adamnan*, in which the description of heaven is very much fuller than in the general run of visions, being in close relation with the conceptions of a happy other world which we find in the voyages. In *Adamnan's Vision* we are told of a "kingdom without pride, without haughtiness, without falsehood, without blasphemy, without fraud, without pretence, without reddening, without blushing, without disgrace, without deceit, without envy, without pride, without disease, without sickness, without poverty, without nakedness, without destruction, without extinction, without hail, without snow, without wind, without wet, without noise, without thunder, without darkness, without coldness;—a kingdom noble, admirable, delightful, with fruitfulness, with light, with odor of a plenteous earth, wherein is delight of every goodness."<sup>3</sup>

Compare with this, Blickling homily, VIII,<sup>4</sup> where heaven is described as "the glorious life, wherein angels, and archangels,

<sup>1</sup> For a complete study of the subject, cf. Nutt's essay, "The Happy Other World," in Meyer & Nutt's ed. of *the Voyage of Bran*. Also A. Graf, *La Leggenda del Paradiso Terrestre*, Torino, 1878. For a complete historical study of the Land of Cockaigne legend, cf. Poeschel, Paul & Braune's *Beiträge* V, p. 389 f.

<sup>2</sup> In the early centuries of our era, on the other hand, heaven often received the preference. Thus, the well-known *Vision of St. Sauve* makes no mention of hell.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Meyer and Nutt, *loc. cit.*, p. 222 f.

<sup>4</sup> Ed. Morris, I, p. 102.

and patriarchs, and prophets, and all the sanctified, abide in the presence of the Lord, where is eternal joy without sadness, youth without age; where is no grief nor toil, nor any uneasiness, nor sorrow, nor weeping, nor hunger, nor thirst, nor ache, nor ill; where no man will meet his enemy, nor leave his friend, but there may he, who shall visit that place, dwell peacefully with angels in eternal joy before our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with God our Father, and with the Holy Ghost without end."

6. And I saw another place over against that other, very squalid, and it was a place of chastisement; and those that were being chastised, and the angels that were chastising, had their raiment dark, according to the atmosphere of the place.

We have here a comparatively definite mention of the position of hell, "over against that other." The relative positions of the Mohammedan abodes of joy and punishment are similar.<sup>1</sup> The belief that hell and purgatory were situated in the centre of the earth, though clearly implied in both the Old and the New Testaments, did not become general until considerably later. The Anglo-Saxons so conceived of it, as the vocabulary testifies.

The chastisers in this paragraph are called angels. In section 12 they are termed "evil spirits;" an identification, in the writer's mind, of the fallen angels as the instruments of divine justice, and as the enemies of God. Only in the later accounts are the evil spirits themselves made to undergo torment.

7. And there were some there hanging by their tongues, and these were they that blaspheme the way of righteousness: and there was beneath them fire flaming and tormenting them.

Suspension by various portions of the body, according to the nature of the crime, is a feature particularly of the visions of St. Paul and Alberic, and of St. Patrick's Purgatory. In the case of the first two, which seem to have been modelled directly upon the Petrine Apocalypse (as will be shown more fully later), the sinful souls are suspended from the branches of burning

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 18, above.

(sword-leaved) trees.<sup>1</sup> I think it, therefore, safe to conclude that our fragment is here somewhat corrupt, and that the burning trees—or some equivalent—were originally a part of it. The statement, as we have it in this paragraph, is very abrupt, coming, as it does, immediately upon the general description of hell. Moreover, the writer says, “some were hanging by their tongues,” from which it would seem that we must infer that others were hanging from other members, which is, of course, borne out by *St. Paul’s Vision*.<sup>2</sup> Hence it may be presumed that at least one paragraph has been lost between sections 6 and 7.

“These were they that blaspheme,” etc. In the *Apocalypse of Peter* the principle of according punishments suitable to the crimes is rigidly observed.<sup>3</sup> Blasphemers are suspended by their tongues; adulterous women are punished together with their partners in crime (9); murderers are devoured by reptiles whilst their victims look upon their agony (10); evil-speakers and false witnesses gnaw their lips and tongues (13, 14), etc. Subsequent accounts become more and more lax in this respect, until finally almost any punishment is made to fit any crime. Dante, of course, is very careful in this particular. The Greek, and many of the Latin versions of the *Vision of St. Paul* observe the rule, but in the popular accounts much freedom exists. Compare, for example, the following from the Vernon MS.:

. . . anothur derk place  
Moni men and wymmen ther amongus,  
That for-freten heore owne tongus:

. . . . .  
Thei usuden ocur and usuri,  
Merciable weore thei nouht,  
Therefore hit schal be dere a-bouht.

Why usurers should be punished by having to gnaw their own tongues is not clear. In the *Apocalypse*, false witnesses are very appropriately punished in a way similar to this.

When we come to the accounts of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, when visions were at the height of their glory, we find

<sup>1</sup> Cf. also p. 14, above.

<sup>2</sup> The trees do not, to be sure, occur in the earliest Greek version of *Paul*, but spring up in the earliest Latin texts.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. also p. 25, above.

the utmost nonchalance observed in the pairing off of punishments and crimes.. The *Vision of Tundale*, the acme of popular visions, in which the most horrible torments are lovingly dwelt upon with the zest of an epicure in torture, offends most flagrantly in this particular.

8. And there was a certain lake full of flaming mire, wherein were certain men that pervert righteousness; and tormenting angels were set upon them.

The burning lake or river, corresponding in a general way to *Acheron* or *Styx*, is one of the commonest features of all, Oriental as well as Christian, accounts of hell. We have encountered burning rivers in the *Book of Enoch*. The lakes are more often full of molten metal or sulphur than of mire, as here. Dante's lake of mire will at once suggest itself. A "burning lake" is also mentioned in Revelation. Representative visions in which burning lakes or rivers occur are: *Thespesius*, *St. Paul*, *Monk of Wenlok*, *Wetlin*, *Charles the Fat*, *Alberic*, *Tundale*, *Monk of Eynsham*, *St. Patrick's Purgatory*, *Thurcill* and *Lazarus*. Dante, of course, has it. In a large number of these and other accounts the flood is spanned by the well-known bridge,<sup>1</sup> which, strange to say, Dante has omitted, probably because it did not work well into his system.<sup>2</sup>

9. And there were also others, women, hung by their hair over that mire that bubbled up: and these were they that had adorned themselves for adultery: and the men that had been joined with them in the defilement of adultery were hanging by their feet, and had their heads in the mire: and all were saying, "We believed not that we should come into this place."

Punishing adulterous women together with their partners in crime is occasionally but not frequently met with in the later visions. In *St. Paul*, Vernon MS., l. 72, we have:

Byndeth hem in knucchenes, forthi  
To brenne lyk to licche,  
Spous-brekers with lechours,  
Rauisschours with rauisschours. . . .

<sup>1</sup>Cf. p. 17 f., above.

<sup>2</sup>Dante has several bridges, of course, but they are not a part of the system of torment.

Douce MS. is a little closer—"bind . . . cursid leuers with here cumpers." The thought is echoed by Aelfric.<sup>1</sup> In *Thurcill*, adulterous men and women are among the performers in the infernal theatre,<sup>2</sup> and in the *Vision of Wettin* adulterous ecclesiastics are immersed into the fiery flood "ad loca genitalium," with their partners in crime opposite them. The *Vision of Alberic* presents the closest parallel to the *Apocalypse*.<sup>3</sup>

10. And I saw the murderers and them that had conspired with them cast into a certain narrow place full of evil reptiles, and being smitten by those beasts, and wallowing there in that torment: and there were set upon them worms, as it were, in clouds of darkness. And the souls of them that had been murdered were standing and looking upon the punishment of those murderers, and saying, "O God, righteous is thy judgment!"

Confronting sinners with the victims of their crimes is a feature of the *Apocalypse of Peter*. (Compare next section.) It is not common in the visions, and we do not find it in *St. Paul's*. In the *Vision of Alberic*, homicides are placed in a lake of blood, and the murderer has for three years to carry, attached to his neck, a demon in the form of his victim. It recalls Dante's account.<sup>4</sup> We find something similar in the late Oriental descriptions of hell.

Serpents and kindred animals, as a mode of torment, occur universally.

11. And hard by that place I saw another narrow place, wherein the gore and the filth of those that were tormented ran down, and became, as it were, a lake there. And there sat women having the gore up to their throats, and over against them a multitude of children that were born out of due time sat crying: and there proceeded from them flames of fire, and smote the women upon the eyes. And these were they that had destroyed their children and caused abortion.

Different degrees of immersion in fire, ice or filth is a common feature, and is found especially in the visions of *St. Paul*, *Wettin*, *Charles the Fat*, *Alberic*, *St. Patrick's Purgatory* and *Lazarus*.

<sup>1</sup>Thorpe, i, 527. Cf. also ii, 2 (b), below.

<sup>2</sup>Sect. 8 (e). <sup>3</sup>Cf. p. 43, below. <sup>4</sup>*Inferno*, xxxii.

In *Alberic*, souls are plunged into ice. Compare Dante, *Inferno*, XXXII, in which murderers are plunged into the frozen lake up to their throats.

Unbaptized children, even those who died the moment they were born (*Tundale*), are often made to undergo a certain amount of punishment. In the *Vision of Alberic*, the first thing the visionary beholds is a large enclosure filled with very young children who had not been baptized.

The punishment for the crime of abortion is very much elaborated in the *Vision of St. Paul*.<sup>1</sup>

12. And there were other men and women on fire up to their middle and cast into a dark place, and scourged by evil spirits, and having their entrails devoured by worms that rested not: and these were they that persecuted the righteous and delivered them up.

The punishment here does not seem very appropriate to the crime. Immersion to the middle is most commonly the punishment of adulterers. Compare *St. Paul*, Vernon MS., l. 102 f.:

And tho that to the navel thou se  
Spous-breakers and lechours thei be. . . .

Compare further note to sect. 9, above.

13. And hard by them again were women and men gnawing their lips, and being tormented, and receiving red-hot iron upon their eyes: and these were they that had blasphemed and spoken evil of the way of righteousness.

14. And over against these were again other men and women gnawing their tongues and having flaming fire in their mouths: and these were the false witnesses.

This incident occurs in just this form in the *Vision of St. Paul*, Vernon MS., l. 121 f.:

Moni men and wymmen ther amongus,  
That for-freten heore owne tongus. . . .

though the punishment is not, as has been said, appropriate to the crime for which it is inflicted.

<sup>1</sup>Vernon, l. 130 f. Sect. 9, below.



This is not a very striking feature, and therefore recurs only very seldom in later visions.

"Having flaming fire in their mouths" recalls the similar feature of the Buddhist system,<sup>1</sup> where the damned are tormented by the flame having entered into them by the nine openings of the body.

15. And in a certain other place were pebbles, sharper than swords, or than any spit, red-hot, and women and men, clad in filthy rags, were rolling upon them in torment: and these were the wealthy that had trusted in their wealth, and had not had pity on orphans and widows, but had neglected the commandment of God.

This feature, with various modifications or elaborations, is a common one throughout the visions. It is very possibly of Oriental origin. Compare the Buddhist account,<sup>2</sup> for example, where the damned are tormented by being fixed on red-hot iron pins, fastened to a floor of the same temperature and metal.

The sharp pebbles also recur in various shapes all through the vision-literature. In the *Vision of Tundale*, they are one of the terrors of the bridge.<sup>3</sup> In that of *Alberic*,<sup>4</sup> they appear as thorns.

The filthy rags recall the black-garmented maidens of *St. Paul's Vision*.

"And had not pity upon orphans," etc. In the *Vision of Alberic*,<sup>5</sup> women who had refused to foster little orphaned children are suspended from trees, and their breasts are constantly sucked dry by serpents.

16. And in another great lake full of pitch and blood and boiling mire stood men and women up to their knees: and these were they that lent money and demanded interest on interest.

From this paragraph we gain stylistic evidence, so to say, of the early date of composition of the *Apocalypse of Peter*. It is the third time that the lake of boiling mire has been called into requisition. The medieval vision-writers would never have been guilty of such a procedure. Their difficulty lay not in the dearth

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Fourth Budd. hell, p. 12, above.

<sup>2</sup> Sect. 8.

<sup>4</sup> P. 45, below.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Sixth Budd. hell, p. 12, above.

<sup>5</sup> P. 43, below.

of torments—they had a superabundance of them: their trouble consisted in the necessity of inventing a commensurate number of crimes. Hence it often happens that the same crime is punished in a variety of ways.

In the *Vision of St. Paul*, backbiters are immersed to their knees, whereas usurers, it will be remembered, gnawed their own tongues.

17. And there were other men and women being hurled down from a great cliff, and they reached the bottom and again were driven by those that were set upon them to climb up upon the cliff, and thence they were hurled down again, and they had no rest from this torment.

The cliff is probably of Oriental origin. Compare the sixth Buddhist hell: They will be tumbled down headlong from a lofty burning mountain, etc.

Cliffs or mountains occur in several visions, notably those of the *Monk of Wenlok*, *Wettin*, *Driithelm* and *Alberic*. They are not mentioned in *St. Paul's*.

The last three sections of our fragment offer only very sporadic analogues to vision-literature. I add them for the sake of completeness.

18. And beside that cliff was a place full of much fire, and there stood men who had made for themselves images instead of God, with their own hands.

19. And beside them were other men and women, who had rods, smiting each other, and never resting from this manner of torment.

The infliction of torment by the souls upon each other is rarely met with in later accounts. Of course, it at once recalls Dante, *Inferno*, Canto VII. Murderers, as has been said, are often tormented by their victims; also unnatural mothers by their offspring.

20. And others again, near them, women and men, were burning, and turning themselves and being roasted: and these were they that had forsaken the way of God.

*Summary of Principal Analogues.*

The incidents adduced in the following sections of the *Apocalypse of Peter* are repeated, occasionally with slight variations, in—

1. *Vision of St. Paul*, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16.
2. *St. Patrick's Purgatory*, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 16.
3. *Vision of Alberic*, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 16, (17).
4. *Vision of Wettin*, 8, 12, (17).
5. *Vision of Charles the Fat*, 8, 12.

It will be seen from this table that the principal incidents of the *Apocalypse of Peter* have been incorporated into the *Vision of St. Paul*. Whether the additions in the Latin versions of the latter work originally existed in that part of the Petrine vision which is lost to us, or whether the writer of the Pauline vision added them on his own account, cannot, of course, be decided. Certain it is, I think, that the later work was written upon the direct model of the earlier, and that these two oldest Christian visions are thus organically connected. And thus we have another link of the composite chain of vision-development established.

The *Apocalypse of Esdras*,<sup>1</sup> and that of the *Virgin*—both of considerably later date than the *Vision of St. Paul*—need be given only passing notice, since their influence on subsequent apocalyptic literature was probably very slight. They themselves seem to have been modelled on the visions of *Peter* and *Paul*.<sup>2</sup>

Turning, therefore, at once to the medieval visions, to the twelfth century, when they began to flourish in all their power, we find two works in particular which have a comparatively large number of direct points of affinity with the Petrine vision. These are *St. Patrick's Purgatory* and the *Vision of Alberic*. The former need not be taken into consideration, since there can be no question of any immediate connection between it and *Peter*. The direct model for *St. Patrick's Purgatory* was pretty certainly some version of *St. Paul's* vision, and the points of resemblance which we find between it and the *Apocalypse of Peter* are only such as occur also in that of *St. Paul*.

<sup>1</sup> Tischendorf, *Apocall. Apocr.*, 24–33.    <sup>2</sup> Cf. Mr. James' essay, *loc. cit.*, p. 69.

But with the *Vision of Alberic* the case is different. The following is a brief abstract of this vision, already discussed in another connection.<sup>1</sup>

Toward the beginning of the twelfth century, in a castle called the Castle of the Seven Brothers, Alberic, the son of the lord of the castle, remained nine entire days in a condition of unconsciousness. It was while in this state that, at the age of eight years, he had the following vision (which is related in the first person):

"A bird of white plumage,<sup>2</sup> like a dove, gently placed its beak into my mouth. I felt that he drew something thence, I knew not what. Then, seizing me by the hair, he raised me up into space. Soon the Apostle Peter appeared, accompanied by two angels, and they conducted me to the place where evil-doers undergo their punishments.

"I saw first a vast circle in which was a multitude of very young children in the midst of burning mists. St. Peter told me it was here that those whom death had stricken before baptism were purified. Then the apostle directed my attention to a terrible valley filled with innumerable mountains of ice, the summits of which the eye could scarcely see. In the ice were tormented many souls: some were in it up to their knees, others to their middles, and still others to their breasts, according to the gravity of their crimes. A few, plunged in headforemost, had only their legs protruding. St. Peter informed me that these were such as had committed rape, adultery or incest.

"We next passed into another valley, not less horrible, full of trees with sword-like branches,<sup>3</sup> from which were suspended women whose breasts were being constantly sucked dry by serpents. These were women who had refused to foster little orphaned children.

"I also saw in the same valley still other women suspended from trees by their hair, with flames beneath them; and these, I was told, were those who had indulged in unlawful loves.

"Further on there was a ladder of white-hot iron, of immense height, covered with spikes. Those who were forced to ascend

<sup>1</sup> P. 6 f., above.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Ps. cxxiv, 7.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. p. 14, above.

it soon fell, and were engulfed in a vast lake of burning oil and rosin.<sup>1</sup> Thus, the apostle told me, were punished those who had not restrained their fleshly appetites on Sundays, holy days and fast days; for it is absolutely necessary to deny oneself all carnal pleasures on these days, and to consecrate them to works of charity.

"I was then conducted to a great lake, filled, as it seemed to me, with blood; but my guide told me it was fire, into which homicides and tyrants were plunged. For three years the murderer was forced to carry upon his neck a demon in the form of his victim, after which he was hurled into the lake.

"We finally arrived at the very mouth of the infernal chasm, resembling a vast pit. The eye could not pierce the darkness; a terrible odor and frightful lamentations proceeded from it. At the entrance was chained an enormous and hideous two-headed serpent. Before one of its mouths was an infinite multitude of souls, whom the monster inhaled like flies, disgorging them again from the other mouth in the form of burning embers.

"I next saw a lake of liquid metal, from which issued jets of flame, which consumed the sacrilegious, and such as had practised simony.

"The apostle next conducted me to a sea of sulphurous fire, in which a multitude of souls were wallowing, tormented by serpents with which demons struck their faces. These were false witnesses.

"Through the middle of the plain, where I now found myself, flowed a burning river. Across it was thrown a bridge of iron, very broad at first, but as narrow as a simple thread toward the centre. The less sinful a soul, the greater the rapidity with which it crossed the bridge. The more sinful ones, upon reaching the centre, fell into the boiling flood below. Demons drew them out and replaced them upon the bridge, whence they again fell, and so on until purged of their crimes, when they could cross the bridge with ease. This, the apostle told me, was the Bridge of Purgatory.

"Continuing upon our way, we arrived at a valley which, my guide informed me, it required three days and nights to

<sup>1</sup> This incident would seem to be a variation upon the bridge-theme.

traverse. It was so strewn with thorns and obstructions that the foot left no mark upon it. I saw a demon mounted upon an immense dragon, and brandishing a hideous serpent in his hand. As soon as a soul arrived in this valley, the demon pursued it across the country, continually scourging it with the serpent. When this punishment had continued until the soul was cleansed of its crimes by grief, it then acquired the airiness necessary to permit it to escape from the pursuit of the monster. The souls then entered a flourishing country, exhaling the sweetest perfumes, where its limbs, torn by the thorns, are healed of their wounds.

"The souls of the just who dwell here, enjoying blessed repose, welcome the new arrival, and congratulate him upon having escaped the common enemy."

Then follows an orthodox description of the sensuous delights of the happy other-world, in this, as in most visions, very brief. In the centre is situated paradise, which these happy souls will enter at the last judgment.

"St. Peter," says Alberic, in conclusion, "showed me a great many other marvelous things, and gave me useful advice, which he ordered me to communicate to men upon my return to earth."

This vision is remarkable in several respects. In the first place, the visionary is a child of eight years. (Compare also the *Vision of William*.) This was probably done advisedly by the monk or monks who wrote and spread this vision, and who realized that a vision of this nature, vouchsafed an unsophisticated child, would appear all the more marvelous and convincing to the credulous public.

The many striking analogues to Dante's poem are evident, and some of them have already been pointed out by Delepiere.<sup>1</sup> They are briefly the following:

*Alberic*: "In the ice were plunged many souls. . . . A few, plunged in headforemost, had only their legs protruding."

*Dante, Inf., xix, 13 f.*:

<sup>1</sup>*Liv. des Vis.*, II, p. 44 f.

Io vidi per le coste e per lo fondo  
 Piena la pietra livida di fori  
 D'un largo tutti, e ciascuno era tondo.

Fuor della bocca a ciascun superchiava  
 D'un peccator li piedi, e delle gambe  
 Infino al grosso; e l'altro dentro stava.

*Alberic*: "I was then conducted to a great lake of blood," etc.  
*Dante, Inf.*, XII, 46 f.:

Ma ficcia gli occhi a valle, che s'approcia  
 La riviera dal sangue, in la qual bolle  
 Qual che per violenza in altrui noccia.

Compare also *Inf.*, XXX, 11 f., already pointed out, in which the punishment of Ugolino's murderer is recorded.

*Alberic*: "At the entrance was chained an enormous and hideous two-headed serpent, inhaling souls like flies."

*Dante's* Cerberus devours a sinful soul "a guisa di mociulla."  
 Compare also *Vision of Tundale*, sect. 13, below.

*Alberic*: "A lake of liquid metal: simony."  
*Dante, Inf.*, XIX, 1 f.:

O Simon Mago, O miseri seguaci,  
 Che le cose di Dio, che di bontate  
 Deono essere sposate, voi rapaci  
 Per oro a per argento adulate. . . .

*Alberic*: "Demon mounted upon a dragon, pursuing souls, and lashing them with serpents."

*Dante, Inf.*, XXV, 16 f.:

Quei si fuggi che non parlo piu verbo;  
 Ed io vidi un Centauro pien di rabbia  
 Venir chiamando: "Ov' e, ov' e l'acerbo?"  
 Maremma non cred' io che tante n'abbia  
 Quante bische egli avea su per la groppa,  
 Infìn dove comincia nostra labbia.  
 Sopra le spalle dietro dalla coppa,  
 Con l'ale aperte gli giacea un draco;  
 E quello affoca qualunque s'intoppa.

This is certainly a very striking parallel. An incident somewhat similar to this we found in the *Vision of Thespisius*, p. 50, above. Compare also the vision of the *Monk of Eynsham*, sect. 6, below. The following episode, similar to the above in that the souls pursue each other, occurs in the Old French poem, *Floire et Blanceflor*:<sup>1</sup>

La ou est Dido et Biblis  
Qui por amor furent ocis,  
Qui par enfer vont duel faisant  
Et lor drus en dolor querant:  
Eles les quierent et querront  
Toujours, ne ja n'es troveront, etc.

Further parallels in Old French romances might be cited. Other general similarities in Dante's work to the *Vision of Alberic* are self-evident.

The most striking analogues in *Alberic* to visions other than those of *Peter* and *Paul* are, in addition to such as have already been instanced, the following:

1. *Alberic* has *three* guides, *Peter* and two angels. This is unusual, and recalls the *Vision of Furseus*, who is raised aloft by two angels, preceded by a third.
2. *Peter* is very rarely the guide. In the *Vision of Ansgar*, *Peter* and *John* officiate.
3. The burning ladder occurs in a sermon of Gregory VII.
4. Lashing with serpents occurs in several accounts.

A more detailed comparison between the visions of *Peter*, *Paul*, and *Alberic* may now be attempted. The features common to all three are:

1. Different degrees of immersion according to the nature of the crime.
2. Suspension from various portions of the body.
3. The burning lake.
4. The flood with serpents.

The incidents common to *Paul* and *Alberic*, as against *Peter*, are:

<sup>1</sup>*Bibl. Elzevirienne*, p. 34. The feature is omitted in the Middle-English version of the poem.



1. The burning trees.<sup>1</sup>
2. The pits with terrible stench.
3. The bridge.<sup>1</sup>

The features common to *Peter* and *Alberic*, as against *Paul*, are:

1. The enclosure filled with young children.
2. Adulterous women hung up by their hair.
3. Lake of blood.

It is hardly possible that the *Vision of Alberic* was modelled upon that of *Paul*. Too many of the most striking features of the latter are omitted in the later work—the burning caldron, the seven pains, the burning wheel, the black-clad maidens. *Alberic*, it will be seen from the above, has but seven points in common with *Paul*, while it has just as many equally striking ones in common with the Petrine vision, which is only a fragment. Moreover, Peter is expressly mentioned as the guide in *Alberic*, showing that the writer had that saint's vision in mind when he wrote. Paul is not mentioned, nor John, nor the Archangel Michael. If they were, the mention of Peter would have no special significance, for we should then merely have a catalogue of the personages most closely associated, in the minds of men, with the other world. Such catalogues do, as a matter of fact, often occur. But in the *Vision of Alberic*, St. Peter has been selected in preference to any other more famous other-world visitor.

Then, too, it must be borne in mind that the short *Apocalypse of Peter* which we possess may be but a small and corrupt fragment of the whole work, and this easily explains away the points which *Paul* and *Alberic* have in common as against *Peter*. But it is just as reasonable to suppose that these features, being widely current in late medieval times, and common property of all vision-writers, were appropriated, quite independently of one another, by the late revisers of the Pauline vision, and the composers of that of *Alberic*. The only feature which offers any difficulties from this point of view is that of the burning trees; and these, as I have already pointed out, we have every reason to believe occurred in the original version of the *Apocalypse of Peter*.

<sup>1</sup> Neither of these features are found in the Greek version of *St. Paul's Vision*.

It seems to me necessary, therefore, to suppose that the Petrine vision was known as such as late as the twelfth century. No doubt it had received many additions and modifications. Possibly a unique manuscript was possessed by the monks of Mt. Cassin, who wrote up the *Vision of Alberic*. Possibly there are other manuscripts of the *Apocalypse* still hidden away in the recesses of some cloister library. In any case, it seems evident that the *Vision of Alberic* was modelled directly upon it—either immediately from a manuscript or through the medium of some now forgotten church father.

In this way we again connect the *Divina Commedia* with the earliest Christian vision of a popular nature which we possess. The *Vision of Alberic* was one of the best-known and most popular accounts of the time, and its influence, together with that of the *Vision of St. Paul*, is traceable in many of the latest visions. As an example, the fifteenth century *Vision of Lazarus*, already referred to, will serve. Here proud men are attached to wheels with hooks, whirling incessantly—the wheel of St. Paul's vision. Envious men are placed to the navel in a flood frozen as ice—immediately copied from the *Vision of Alberic*. Angry men are placed on butchers' tables and slaughtered; slothful souls are in a dark hall full of serpents; the covetous are placed in kettles of boiling lead and oil; gluttons, in a stinking, venomous, toad-filled flood, the waters of which they are forced to drink; the incontinent are punished in a field full of deep pits, with fire and sulphur—almost all of which features recall the visions of *St. Paul* or *Alberic*.

After the thirteenth century, the influence of Dante's work must, of course, be taken into consideration.

## II. THE VISIONS IN ANGLO-SAXON LITERATURE.

### 1. VISIONS RECOUNTED BY BEDE.

The authority which Bede enjoyed in England throughout the Middle Ages, and the unquestioning and reverent credulity which was accorded all his utterances, make his work a most important factor in a study like the present. It was through

the medium of Bede's writings that some of the most important patristic doctrines found their way into England. In particular, Bede was the first to promulgate a definite doctrine on purgatory on English soil. In short, he was for England much what Gregory the Great had been for continental Europe. We know how widely-spread the visions which Gregory tells of became on the continent, and it will be seen that those which Bede recounts had an even greater influence upon subsequent vision-literature in England. Whence Bede himself derived the material for his accounts is another, and a quite unanswerable question. The *Vision of Furseus* is easily accounted for. This holy man spent the greater part of his early life in France, and, while there, no doubt became imbued with the orthodox patristic doctrines and conceptions. But this vision is not original with Bede. Neither, to be sure, is that of *Drihthelm*, if we are to accredit Bede's own statements; but *Drihthelm's* vision is related with all the careful regard for detail which is characteristic of the continental visions, and it is, therefore, highly probable that the historian elaborated this story, as it was told him, from his own readings. The question is not an important one. The abstract of the *Vision of Drihthelm*, given below, will show very plainly that but very few, if any, of its features originated in England.

The *Vision of Furseus*<sup>1</sup> is about the earliest English vision we possess, and it is principally in this fact that its interest and importance for our study lies. Its influence on later visions was slight, and its details are not particularly striking.

Furseus, Bede tells us, came out of Ireland into the province of the East Saxons during the reign of Sigebert. He was renowned both for his words and for his actions, and "remarkable for singular virtues, being desirous to live a stranger for our Lord whenever an opportunity should offer." On coming into England he was honorably received, and succeeded in converting many unbelievers to Christ. Being encouraged in a vision to

<sup>1</sup> *Hist. Eccl.*, III. Aelfric, Thorpe, II. For complete life of Furseus, cf. *Acta Sancti Bolland*, 16 January, p. 413 f. Cap. I and II recount early life in France; Cap. III, sojourn in England; Cap. IV and V, return to, and death in, France; Cap. VI, miracles after death; epilogue and life as related by Bede.

continue the work he had undertaken, he built a monastery, which was afterwards much embellished by King Anna and his nobles.

Furseus was of "noble Scottish blood,"<sup>1</sup> but much more noble in mind than in birth, having from his earliest years particularly applied himself to reading sacred books, and following monastic discipline.

One day he fell into a trance at his monastery, and leaving his body from the evening till the cock crew,<sup>2</sup> he was found worthy to behold the choirs of angels, and to hear the praises which are sung in heaven.

Three days later he had another vision, not only of the greater joys of heaven, but also of the state of sinful souls. He was guided by three angels,<sup>3</sup> one of whom preceded, while the other two defended him from the perils of the way. He was attacked by evil spirits, who were driven away by the angels.<sup>4</sup> The devils advanced as arguments against him all his deeds, superfluous words, and even thoughts,<sup>5</sup> but were answered and defeated by the angels.<sup>6</sup> He was next lifted on high, and being told to look back, beheld a dark valley beneath him, in which were four fires not far distant from each other. These fires were, respectively, falsehood, covetousness, discord and iniquity, and they will kindle and consume the world. These fires, increasing by degrees, extended so as to meet one another, and, being joined, became one immense flame. This, the angel tells Furseus, "tries every man according to the merits of his works; for every man's concupiscence shall burn in the fire; for, as everyone burns in the body through unlawful pleasure, so, when discharged of the body, he shall burn in the punishment which he has deserved."<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "De genere Scottorum," i. e., Irish.

<sup>2</sup> The time of duration of visions varies greatly. Three days is the favorite period.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *Alberic*, p. 47, above.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *Tundale*, Dante.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. p. 15, above.

<sup>6</sup> Perhaps we have here an early intimation of the belief, common in the Middle Ages, that an individual's good and evil angels contend for his soul after death. Cf. Grimm, *Mythology*, p. 796 f.

<sup>7</sup> This is evidently the purgatorial fire of the judgment day which we find in the Anglo-Saxon poets.

The guiding angel then divided the flame, and they passed through. Furseus saw devils flying through the fire. He was vouchsafed a more extended view of the heavenly troops, after which they retraced their steps, the angel again dividing the flame. But this time Furseus does not escape unscathed, for the demons, seizing one whom they were tormenting in the flame, threw him at Furseus, and, touching his shoulder and arm, burned them. From this man Furseus had received a garment when he died. Hereupon follows a lively dispute between the good and evil spirits as to the extent of Furseus's guilt, incurred by this act. The good angels are of course victorious. After this Furseus returned to his body, and it was said that, when relating these visions, though it was winter weather and a hard frost, and he was sitting in a thin garment, yet he sweated as if it had been in the greatest heat of summer.

This vision lacks entirely the dominant characteristics of the large majority of similar works. The vision of heaven is fairly well developed, but there is practically no vision whatever of hell. It is rather a forecast, bordering upon the allegorical, of the judgment day. Two points, however, we gain by it for England—the "trance form," that is, falling sick and remaining unconscious for a given length of time, and the guide.

The *Vision of Drihthelm* is of greater importance to our study, since it possesses all the essentials of a late medieval work. Many features of the subsequent English and Irish visions can be traced back to it,<sup>1</sup> and it may therefore be considered the bond which linked perhaps more than any other single work, with the possible exception of *St. Paul's Vision*, the continental stories with those of England. It is, furthermore, particularly interesting, in that it makes specific mention of purgatory as a place of probation, as distinguished from hell, whence there is no release. Nowhere else throughout Anglo-Saxon literature, outside of Bede, is this doctrine advanced. The closest approach to it is the purgatorial fire of the judgment day—a conception derived immediately from the Bible.

<sup>1</sup> In the *Vision of the Monk of Eynsham*, for example, we seem to have direct borrowing from *Drihthelm*.

The following is a brief abstract of the *Vision of Drihthelm*. Analogies to earlier and later works will be indicated in the foot-notes, showing, wherever it is possible to do so, the ultimate source of the incidents and the subsequent use made of them. The resemblances to the *Book of Enoch* and to the *Vision of Thespesius* are especially significant. (When the origin and history of a feature has already been traced elsewhere, reference will merely be made to the passage in which the point was first treated.)

When his soul left his body, Drihthelm was led by his guide,<sup>1</sup> toward the north-east.<sup>2</sup> This guide had a shining countenance and a bright garment.<sup>3</sup> They first came to a valley of great breadth and depth,<sup>4</sup> and of infinite length.<sup>5</sup> On the left it was full of dreadful flames; on the right, violent hail, wind and snow held sway. The souls, seeking relief alternately from the one or the other torment, constantly oscillated between them.<sup>6</sup> But this was not hell.<sup>7</sup>

As they proceeded, the place suddenly became dark, and finally the obscurity became so dense that Drihthelm could distinguish nothing but the shape of his guide's garment.<sup>8</sup> "As we went on through the shades of night, on a sudden there appeared before us frequent globes of black flames,<sup>9</sup> rising, as it were, out of a great pit, and falling back again into the same." Drihthelm observes that the flames are full of souls;<sup>10</sup> a terrible stench proceeds from the flames.

Here his guide suddenly leaves him,<sup>11</sup> and Drihthelm hears behind him the noise of mingled lamentations and laughter, the latter proceeding from demons, the former from a monk, a layman, and a woman, who are being hurled into the pit. In the

<sup>1</sup> *Apoc. of Peter*, 2.

<sup>2</sup> *Enoch*, xxvii. Also *Apoc. of Peter*, 3.

<sup>3</sup> *Apoc. of Peter*, 3.

<sup>4</sup> *Enoch*, liii, 1. Throughout vision-literature. Cf. especially *Monk of Eynsham*, sect. 5.

<sup>5</sup> Concerning size of hell, etc., cf. p. 23, note.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. p. 11, above. Also *Tundale*, sect. 5.

<sup>7</sup> Paul's and Tundale's guides constantly tell them that worse things are still to come.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. *Tundale*, sect. 4. *St. Patrick's Purgatory*, sect. 3.

<sup>9</sup> Anglo-Saxon hell, p. 60, below.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. *Thespesius*, p. 27, above.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28. Also *Tundale*.

meantime some of the demons, with glaring eyes, and vomiting stinking fire from their mouths and nostrils, attack Drihthelm, and threaten to lay hold on him with burning tongs. While thus perilously situated, he sees a bright star approaching, which proves to be his guide, who puts the demons to flight.<sup>1</sup>

Going to the south-east, Drihthelm is led out of hell to the abodes of the blessed.

Further borrowings from Drihthelm in the later English visions will be indicated in the special treatment of those works.

The *Vision of Drihthelm* is related in Book V, chapter 12, of the *Ecclesiastical History*. Bede adduces two other short visions in the same work, but they are of a very general character, and need not, therefore, be considered here. Compare *Hist. Eccl.*, v, 14; v, 13.

## 2. THE ANGLO-SAXON HELL.

### (a) *The Poets.*

The Anglo-Saxon poets, especially Cynewulf and his school, have given us, in scattered passages throughout their works, a brief description of hell as they conceived it; and by a collation of these we are enabled to obtain a fairly satisfactory basis for comparison with the conceptions of the vision-writers. That there is a close connection between the two branches, there can, I think, be no doubt.

Waller Deering, in his dissertation,<sup>2</sup> makes a brief study of the descriptions of hell found in the works of the Anglo-Saxon poets, and from them attempts to arrive at independent results for Anglo-Saxon. Regarding the sources of these conceptions, he says, p. 57: "In no feature of our subject have we found such a mixture of different and contradictory conceptions. But, strange as they may seem at first sight, they should not surprise us. When we go back to the sources of these conceptions, and notice how the poets' general idea of hell was gradually developed from a union of very different elements, each with

<sup>1</sup> *Tundale*, sect. 3.

<sup>2</sup> *The Anglo-Saxon Poets on the Judgment Day*, Halle, 1890.

strong influence on the whole, these contradictions appear quite natural. Some of the features involved seem taken directly from the Bible, though perhaps generally indirectly, through Christian tradition. . . . These Bible teachings, as they had become current Christian tradition, and been learned and remembered by the poets, are doubtless the basis of the corresponding conceptions in their descriptions. Other of these conceptions, however, we must seek in Germanic mythology. We have seen how Hel, originally the name of the goddess, came to mean the place of departed spirits. As such, like the Hellia of old Germany, and the Niflheimr of the North, it was a cold and dark and dreary land of shadows, deep down under the earth, just as Caedmon's *wite hus, deop dreama leas, sinnihte beseald*, but differing widely from the last, in that it, like Hellia and Niflheimr, was not a place of punishment, but only the realm of the dead, of all who had fallen in battle, like Hades.

"Quite different now, in this respect, was Nastrond, which Kemble<sup>1</sup> describes as a place of torment and punishment, the strand of the dead, filled with foulness, dark and cold and gloomy. Kemble adds, 'The kingdom of Hel was Hades, the invisible world of shadows; Nastrond was what we call hell.'

"In the course of time these conceptions of Hel and Nastrond grew closer together, and, finally, the two were no longer separate."

This fusion, Deering thinks, accounts, for example, for the paradoxical presence of both fire and extreme cold in the Anglo-Saxon hell; the latter being the old mythological element, the former the new Christian element.

"To these fundamental outlines now," he continues, "were added numerous details; the shadowy forms in these vague pictures were touched up with glaring colors. In the numerous 'visions' of those said to have died and risen again, hell's horrors are portrayed with appalling vividness."

A more careful study of the visions and their development before Gregory and Bede would, I believe, have caused Deering to lay less stress upon the influence of Germanic mythology on the Anglo-Saxon hell. Moreover, it is incorrect to speak of the visionaries as having "died and risen again."

<sup>1</sup>*Saxons in England*, I, p. 395.



It would, of course, be folly to deny that the traditions of Germanic mythology lived on after the introduction of Christianity. It is, indeed, most probable that the general picture which the Anglo-Saxon poets had in mind when they wrote of hell was that of the traditional cold, wind-swept place which their fathers had conceived. Many of the general terms used to designate the abode of the dead indubitably point to this. But the detail, the specific attributes ascribed by the poets to their hell, must have had a different model.

Deering closes his treatment with the remark, p. 60: "We incline to the opinion that, in their descriptions, the poets have made but little direct use of any Latin originals (!), but have for the most part simply embodied current belief, Christian-heathen as it was, according to their own plans. Some degree of originality and genius they surely must have had."

This last remark from a student of Anglo-Saxon borders upon philological heresy. No one will deny for a moment that the Anglo-Saxon imagination was most fertile, and that other-world descriptions, which had no basis whatsoever in fact, would allow the poet the broadest possible scope in the exercise of this faculty. The Anglo-Saxon poet loves to expand his theme to its utmost limits; to change the mere black and white of his copy to a many-colored, flowery word-painting. Cynewulf's genius, in particular, was distinctly lyrical in its nature, and rapid and sustained action is foreign to his work. He never invents a situation or a circumstance, but having found it in his model, he places it in every conceivable light, and with it as a corner-stone, builds up upon it a structure of poetry all his own. And what is true of Cynewulf is equally true in a greater or less degree of all Anglo-Saxon poetry. Even *Beowulf*, an epic, and from its very nature a poem of incident and action, frequently stops in its never very wild career to describe, in characteristic compounds and collocations, the beauties of some natural feature, of some cave or lake, some hall or hero, after which the unwilling story is again resumed.

I recall this well-known feature of Anglo-Saxon poetical style in this connection because it goes to prove that the Anglo-Saxon poet, though he might elaborate, would never *invent* a situation

or torment for his hell. Hence, since Germanic mythology furnished merely the most general outlines of his conception, he must have found the detail in Christian accounts. The religious poets were always, we may now pretty certainly assume, monks and scholars, and Latin, to say nothing of Greek, learning was universal among them. Cynewulf, at all events, was well acquainted with Gregory, Augustine, Bede, and others of the church fathers, whose works were usually alive with those orthodox continental accounts of hell and purgatory whose growth, as far as visions are concerned, has already been traced. The very fact that so much of the late Anglo-Saxon poetry—and prose, for that matter—deals specifically with subjects connected with the final doom and its results, goes to show that the epidemic of terror which, under the skillful management of the clergy, had already begun its work on the continent, had made itself felt to some degree in England. Bede, a disciple, in a way, of Gregory, was widely read, and was, as has been said, chiefly responsible for the promulgation of the doctrine of purgatory in England—a doctrine which was probably well established when Cynewulf wrote. Homilists and preachers were no doubt very active in publishing, with original additions, the accounts of the other world which they found in books; and the visions, especially those recounted by Gregory and Bede, were powerful tools ready to their hands.

The following comparison of the hell of the Anglo-Saxon poets, in respect of detail, with the orthodox patristic accounts, will speak for itself. For the illustrative passages I am in the main indebted to Deering's compilation, which I have taken occasion here and there to augment.

Hell is represented as a deep abyss or gulf, *grund*, *hellegrund*, *scraef*, *wilescaef*, *dæl*, etc., which conception may have been derived either from Scriptures or from mythology. Hell is also termed *morðorhof*, *El.*, 1302; *morðorhus*, *Cr.*, 1625; *deaðsele*, *Cr.*, 1537; *wyrmaele*, *Jud.*, 119, etc., the figure being that of an earthly prison—a kind of word-metaphor which we should naturally expect from a poet who compares Christ on his heavenly throne to the ring-giver in the mead-hall.

The situation of hell is *under the earth*. This is evident from the use of such terms as *grund*, *scræf*, *dæl*, etc. But compare particularly *Rid.*, xli, 40 f.:

eac is under eorþan eal sceawige  
wom wraþscrafu wraþra gæsta.

These are all instances of Anglo-Saxon expansion, and we need not seek their genesis elsewhere than in the poets' brain.

The great spaciousness of hell is often dwelt upon. Thus it is *grundleas*, *Cr.*, 1546; *sidan sele*, *CS.*, 131, while *CS.*, 721, represents it as 100,000 miles in extent from top to bottom.<sup>1</sup>

In strange contrast to this, thinks Deering, "is the idea of limitation, narrowness and confinement brought out in terms like in *þam engan ham*, *El.*, 920; *ænga stede*, *Gen.*, 356; *ufan hit is enge*, *Bi D.D.*, 22; *þæs engestan eðelrices*, *SS.*, 213."

But it is not strange, inasmuch as the terms of spaciousness are to be interpreted literally, whereas those of narrowness permit of no other than a figurative interpretation. The word *enge*, the one invariably employed in the cases under consideration, is more frequently used in its metaphorical than in its literal sense. Compare *Elene*, 1260,

nearusorge dreah,  
enge rune . . .

where both *nearu* and *enge* are used in the sense of oppressive. Or it may mean cruel, painful, as in *Phœnix*, 52, *enga deað*. The same thing often applies to the word *cald*, in such collocations as *caldan clommu*, *Cr.*, 1629, where it probably means simply cheerless, hopeless, with no reference at all to temperature. This will explain away a part of the second anomaly which Deering finds in the Anglo-Saxon descriptions of hell, namely, the presence of both heat and cold among the torments. "Thus

<sup>1</sup>*Cf. Enoch*, xxi, 4; p. 23, above, note.

I have employed Deering's abbreviations throughout this section. *CS.* (*Crist und Satan*), so called by Grein, includes an account of the harrowing of hell. *Cf. Grein-Wuelker*, II, 542 f. *Bi Domes Dæge* and *Be Domes Dæge* are two distinct poems on the judgment day. *Cf. Gr.-Wuelk.*, II, 251; III, 171. Another poem on the harrowing of hell will be found in *Gr.-Wuelk.*, III, 175. *SS.* is the poem, *Salomon und Saturn*. The other abbreviations are self-explanatory.

hell is not only *þæt hate dæl*, *Cr.*, 1542, *hate scræf*, *CS.*, 419, but also *þonne caldan grund*, *CS.*, 637, where men are bound down in cold fetters, *caldan clommum*, *Cr.*, 1629, as well as in fiery bonds." This, as was said above, Deering has explained by supposing the mythological and Christian ideas of hell to have been present together in the poet's mind. But we have no need to go so far for a solution. It has already been pointed out, p. 11, above, that extreme cold existed side by side with the torment of fire in the Buddhist hells. We have the same feature in the *Book of Enoch*, and in innumerable Christian accounts, including the *Vision of Drihtelm*, given above. So the double-torment idea was current in England some time before Cynewulf wrote. It is interesting to note the survival of this conception long after visions had ceased to be credited. Thus, Shakespeare, *Meas. for Meas.*, II, 1, has :

*Claudio*: Ay, but to die and go we know not where;  
To lie in cold obstruction, and to rot;  
This sensible warm motion to become  
A kneaded clod; and the delighted spirit  
To bathe in fiery floods, or to reside  
In thrilling regions of thick-ribbed ice;  
To be imprisoned in the viewless winds  
And blown with restless violence round about  
The pendant world. . . .

or Milton, *Par. Lost*, II, 601 :

The bitter change  
Of fierce extremes, extremes by change more fierce,  
From beds of raging fire to starve in ice  
Their soft ethereal warmth.

Many passages could be cited from Middle-English literature in which the same idea is dwelt upon. A notable example is the Judas legend,<sup>1</sup> detached portions of which are often met with in the romantic and legendary literature. In the Brandan legend Judas is represented as seated upon a rock in the middle of the ocean, suffering the torment of fire on one side of his body, that of extreme cold on the other. This punishment constitutes a

<sup>1</sup>For a study of this legend, see Creizenach, "Judas Ischarioth in Legende und Sage des Mittelalters," *Paul & Braune's Beiträge*, II, p. 177 f.

respite which is granted him every Sunday; during the remainder of the week he is tormented in hell-fire with Pilate, Herod, Annas, and Caiaphas.

Similar is a passage from the romance of *Huon of Burdeaux*.<sup>1</sup> Huon, on board a vessel, hears a thunderous roar, and grows fearful. A mariner is told to find out what it is, "and so he dyd, and behelde that waye / and at last he parseyued the daungerous Goulfe, whereof he had harde often tymes spoken of / whereof he had suche fere that nere hand he had fallen downe into the see / he came downe and sayd to the patron, 'Sir, we be al in the way to be lost, for we be nere one of the *Goulfes of Hel*. . . .'" Judas, eternally damned, is seated upon a piece of canvas which rides the waves. He bemoans his lot most bitterly, and warns the mariners of their danger. They escape unharmed.

For Dante's wonderful portrayal of Judas's punishment, see *Inferno*, canto XXXIV.

The cold wind of the *Vision of Drihthelm*, and of the hell of Germanic mythology, also occurs in some Anglo-Saxon accounts. Deering quotes the following passage from *Genesis*, 313 f.:

pær habbað heo on efen ungemet lange  
ealra feonda gehwilec fyr edneowe:  
þonne cymð on uhtan easterne wind,  
forst fyrnum cald, symble fyr oððe gar.

There are but few, very few, passages of this kind in the Caedmonian poems, for the Christian conceptions had not yet gained wide currency in England when they were written. The passage just quoted is a part of the interpolation from the Old Saxon *Genesis*, and may therefore be assigned a considerably later date than the body of the poem. It would be another proof, if such were now needed, of the correctness of Sievers' theory concerning *Genesis B*.

The fact of the flame of hell's fire giving no light—Deering's third paradox—is constantly emphasized, and *swært* is a favorite epithet for it.<sup>2</sup> Aelfric expresses this belief most clearly. "The

<sup>1</sup> See Lee's edition of Lord Berners' translation, *E. E. T. S.*, Ex. Ser., vol. 41; 2, p. 361.

<sup>2</sup> Hell is thus referred to five times in the interpolated portion of *Genesis*: 312, 345, 529, 761, 792. For note on *swært*, see W. E. Mead, "Color in Old English Poetry," *Pubs. Mod. Lang. Ass.*, N. S., VII, 2.

miserable guilty ones," he says, "shall suffer torment in everlasting fire, and yet that swart fire shall give them no light."<sup>1</sup> And again, "Verily, the hellish fire has unspeakable heat and no light, but burns eternally in swart darkness."<sup>2</sup> In this conception we very probably have a reminiscence of the classical "lux atra."

Filth and stench, invariable attributes of the patristic hell and purgatory, are also met with in the Anglo-Saxon poets. Thus, *Be D. D.*, 205, *lig and cyle and laðlic ful*. Stench in *Be D. D.*, 207 f.:

hy mid nosan ne magon naht geswæccan  
butan instences ormætnesse.

In St. Paul's vision, and in many other accounts, the torment of stench is given a most prominent position.

The loathsome flood, or river, so conspicuous a feature in almost all detailed early Christian accounts of hell, is only hinted at by the Anglo-Saxon poets. *SS.*, 939, we have *wæter insende*, a torment of the fallen angels.

But the monstrous serpents and dragons with which the imaginations of the visionaries always peopled these horrible bodies of water, are constantly introduced by the Anglo-Saxon poets. *SS.*, 941 f., *atol deor monig irenum hornum*, with which compare *St. Paul*, Vernon MS., l. 135 f.:

Brennyng dragouns and serpentes i-fere  
Honginge aboute heor nekkes were,  
Gnawing hem to don hem schom,  
To tere the flesh from the bon;  
And ther weore foure angels to telle  
That weren of the hous of helle,  
Brennyng hornes hadde thei on hed,  
Thei hem turmented. . . .

*SS.*, 943 f., we have *blodige earnas and blace næþþran*. Whence the Anglo-Saxon poet derived the conception of "bloody eagles," and just what function they were supposed to fulfil in the system of hell-torment, is something of a mystery. Possibly the poet misread his Latin original, if he had one. More probably he

<sup>1</sup>Thorpe, I, 133.

<sup>2</sup>Thorpe, I, 531.

had in mind some mythological story, perhaps the eagle of Prometheus.

In *Cr.*, 1548, we have :

wrapum wýrmum and mid wita fela  
frecnum feorhgomum folcum scendeð.

In *Jud.*, 119, hell is termed *wýrmsele*. The fire-breathing dragons which guard the entrance to hell, *CS.*, 98 f.,

ece æt helle duru dracan eardigað  
hate on hreþre,

are certainly a reminiscence of the Cerberus myth or its concomitants, with perhaps an admixture of the Germanic dragons.

The torments of hunger and thirst, lack of sleep, toil, weariness, sickness, disease, old age, etc., constitute a catalogue of the ills which mankind is heir to, and would naturally be adduced in any list of discomforts. They are, as Deering correctly says (p. 55), directly contrasted with the corresponding joys of heaven, *Crist*, 1653 f., *Be Domes' Dæge*, 255 f., *Phoenix*, 611 f., etc. Compare also the passage, already quoted in another connection, from the *Vision of Adamnan* (p. 34, above).

The torments of the mind which the damned have to undergo are also particularly emphasized by the Anglo-Saxon poets, and we have in them another feature borrowed directly from the patristic accounts. We find, too, the biblical weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth, *heof*, *SS.*, 935, *wop*, *SS.*, 934, *grisbitung*, *Be D. D.*, 226, *toþa geheaw*, *CS.*, 339, etc. See especially the homilies in this connection.

Exclusion from the sight of God is another feature of a distinctly Christian nature. Compare *Cr.*, 1537 f., *nales dryhtnes gemynd siððan gesecað*. *El.*, 1301 f., etc.

One of the most striking torments of this nature Deering seems to have overlooked—namely, that the damned will be forced to look upon the bliss of the blessed. This is a feature but rarely met with in the visions; but it is characteristic of many oriental accounts, especially the Mohammedan. Compare *Crist*, 1285 f. :

þonne bið þæt þridde þearfendum sorg,  
cwipende cearo, þæt hy on þa clænan seoð,  
hu hi fore goddædum glade blissiað,  
þa hi unsælg ær forhogdun  
to donne, þonne him dagas læstun,  
and be hyra weorcum wepende sar,  
þæt hi ær freolice fremedon unriht.  
Geseoð hi þa betran blæde scinan:  
ne bið him hyra yrmðu an to wite,  
ac þara oþerra ead to sorgum,  
þæs þe hy swa fægre gefean on fyrndagum  
and swa ænlice anforletun  
þurh leaslice lices wyne,  
earges fæschoman idelne lust.

The everlastingness of hell-torment is finely dwelt upon in *Crist*, 1541 f.:

þæt is ece cwealm!  
Ne mæg þæt hate dæl of heoloðcynne  
in sinnehte synne forbærnan  
to widan feore wom of bære sawle,  
ac þær se deopa seað dreorge fedeð,  
grundleas gieme gæsta on þeostre,  
seleð hy mid þy ealdan lige and mid þy egsan forste,  
wraþum wýrmum and mid wita fela  
frecnum feorhgomum folcum scendeð.

Compare also *Judith*, 117 f.:

Ne þearf he hopian no  
þystrum forþylmed, þæt he ðonan mote  
of þam wýrmsele, ac þær wunian sceal  
awa to aldre butan ende forð  
in ðam heolstran ham, hyhtwynna leas.

By summarizing these scattered references to the fate of the sinful soul after death, we are enabled to arrive at a fairly accurate statement of the Anglo-Saxon poets' conception of hell. Hell is a deep pit under the earth, incalculably immense in area, shrouded in eternal darkness. The principal torment is that of fire, but the flame is black, and burns without light. Side by side with extreme heat is the torment of cold; storms of wind, hail, and frost sweep down from the four corners of hell. Frightful monsters, dragons, serpents, bloody eagles, people the awful depths, and dragons guard the entrance. The sinful souls are bound



down with fetters, suffering the utmost agonies of mind in addition to those of the body. Consumed with bitter remorse and despair, they must remain thus eternally, without hope of ever being released from their sufferings or of gaining the bliss of the righteous, which they are forced to look upon.

Such a summarizing of widely-scattered elements, covering the whole field of Anglo-Saxon poetry, is not, perhaps, an entirely legitimate procedure. Still it is, in the main, only with Cynewulf that we are dealing, and the summary may, therefore, reasonably be considered to represent his conception of hell. The passages quoted from *Judith* and the *Riddles* are quite in Cynewulf's manner, and furnish stylistic evidence in favor of attributing those works to Cynewulf himself, or to an imitator of him. The resemblance between Cynewulf's conception of hell and the orthodox accounts of the church fathers and the early vision-writers is, it seems to me, very plain. Even should we deny to Cynewulf a knowledge of any writer other than Bede, the *Vision of Drihthelm* alone would be a sufficient basis for the greater part of his conception. But we know to a certainty that he was also acquainted with Gregory; probably with Augustine and Alcuin, and very possibly with any number of other writers. I am therefore inclined to think that the Anglo-Saxon poets, especially Cynewulf and his school, derived their conceptions not nearly so much from the surviving traditions of Germanic mythology as from the writings of the church fathers. Their hell, therefore, is a purely literary product, with perhaps a very light background of tradition. This statement applies with even greater force to the homilists, who will next be considered.

The question of purgatory among both poets and homilists is a very interesting one, and seemed worthy of a separate treatment.

#### (b) *The Homilists.*

The Anglo-Saxon homilies—Blickling collection, Aelfric, Wulfstan—are alive with descriptions of the day of doom, and of the state of affairs which will follow it. This, of course, is to be expected, since they were written toward the close of the tenth and at the beginning of the eleventh century, when thoughts

and fears of a momentary arrival of the judgment day were uppermost in men's minds. "No man on earth," says the Blickling homilist in his sermon on Ascension Day, "is so holy, and none in heaven, as to know when our Lord will put an end to the world on the judgment day, save only the Lord alone. Yet we know that the time is not far distant, since the signs and tokens which the Lord foretold would happen before the last day have all been fulfilled, with the single exception that the accursed stranger, the Antichrist, has not yet come to earth. Yet it will not now be long before that also shall happen; for this earth must necessarily end in the time which is now present, since five ages have already passed. In this age of the world, then, shall this earth come to an end, and the greater part of it has already elapsed—exactly nine hundred and seventy-one years this year."

Whether the clergy themselves shared in the universal panic is very doubtful; but that they employed every possible means to keep fear at fever heat is evident from the literature of the time. Preachers all over Europe were proclaiming, in voices of thunder, the terrible torments of hell which were soon to befall sinners: the surest way to escape at least a part of the awful, universal doom was to renounce all earthly pomp and pleasure, and to lead a life of poverty and penance till the judgment-day should fall. In other words, divide your worldly possessions among the poor, or, better still, bestow them upon the church, and you may possibly escape eternal damnation. We cannot doubt that the panic proved a fruitful source of revenue to the church, whether the clergy were sincere in their utterances, or not.

The descriptions of hell which we find in these homilies tally very closely with those of the Anglo-Saxon poets. In the homilies, however, we have connected accounts, and we may call them the fruits of the first popular attempt on English soil to apply the visions practically. Bede had done the same thing, to be sure, but only incidentally, recording the fact and drawing the moral with a view rather to stimulating to a better life on earth, than to strengthening a belief in the doctrines of hell and purgatory. We need only to compare the manner of Bede's narration of the visions of Furseus and Drihthelm with that of Aelfric, when

recounting the same visions, in order at once to recognize in the one the historian, to whom the fact is everything, and in the other the preacher, to whom it is merely a vehicle for moral precept.

The homilists have retained much of the poetical vocabulary in their descriptions. Thus, in Blickling Hom., v,<sup>1</sup> "And they do not consider that the *greedy* hell is ever open to devils." *Swart* is a favorite attribute for flame, as in the poets. Aelfric,<sup>2</sup> "That swart fire shall give them no light." Instances could be multiplied.

A few representative passages from the homilies will serve to indicate the intimate way in which they are connected with the visions. As regards the *Vision of St. Paul*, we find a remarkable difference of opinion between the Blickling homilists and Aelfric. The former refer to the work as they would to any canonical book of Scripture, sometimes introducing a quotation from it with a mere "St. Paul said," without further reference to the source; and the words of the vision carry as much authority as would those of the epistles. Wright, *St. Patrick's Purgatory*, p. 7, is, therefore, in error when he says: "He (Aelfric), as well as other earlier writers who allude to this latter vision (*St. Paul*), pretend to no further knowledge of it than what may be gathered from the apostle's own words, who mentions a person that had been carried in the spirit to the third heaven." The statement will not apply to the Blickling homilies, to which Wright is evidently referring. Thus, in Homily iv, we find the following: "'Oh!' said St. Paul, 'that is accounted the devil's treasure for a man to hide his sins from his confessor,' because to our adversary a man's sins are more acceptable than all earthly treasure. The priest that is very tardy in driving out the devil from a man, and in speedily ridding the soul with oil and water against the adversary, shall be assigned to the fiery river and the iron hook. For St. Paul said that he was not far from the side of the priest of whom we have said above that he was drawn by the iron hook into the pitchy river, another old man<sup>3</sup> whom four accursed angels led, with great cruelty, and sank him into the fiery water *up to his knees*, and they had bound him with fiery chains so that he could not say, 'God, have mercy upon me!' Then

<sup>1</sup> Morris, p. 60.

<sup>2</sup> Thorpe, i, p. 133.

<sup>3</sup> Vernon MS., l. 173 f. Cf. *Paul*, sect. 10.

said the eminent teacher to the angel that led him, 'Who is this old man?' The angel replied, 'He is a bishop who did more evil than good. Before the world he had a great name, and disregarded it all, and his Creator, who had given him that name.' Then said St. Paul, that since the bishop had not shown mercy to orphans, nor to widows, nor to any of God's poor, he was requited according to his own deeds."<sup>1</sup>

The vision is frequently thus referred to and quoted; in fact it, together with the *Gospel of Nicodemus*, constitutes the principal basis for the Blickling homilists' conception of hell.

Aelfric, on the other hand, who everywhere shows his superiority to his predecessors, says: "How do some men read the false composition, which they call the vision of Paul, when he himself said that he heard the secret words which no earthly man may speak?"<sup>2</sup> Both of which opinions go to show that the *Vision of St. Paul* must have been a well-known work in England probably as early as the tenth century, since it was so familiarly spoken of at the beginning of the eleventh. No doubt it was one of the earliest Christian importations into England.

Despite his derogatory statement, Aelfric would appear once at least to quote from Paul's vision. Thus, he says: "In this present church are mingled good and evil, as clean corn with foul cockle: but at the end of this world the true judge will bid his angels gather the cockle by burthens, and cast it into the unquenchable fire. *By burthens they will gather the sinful from the righteous; then will murderers be tied together in the hellish fire, and robbers with robbers, the covetous with the covetous, adulterers with adulterers;* and so all wicked associates bound together shall be brought into God's barn: that is, the righteous shall be brought to everlasting life, where storm comes not, nor any tempest that may injure the corn. Then will the good be nowhere but in heaven, and the evil nowhere but in hell."<sup>3</sup>

With this compare *Vision of St. Paul*, Vernon MS., l. 76:

As God seide in the gospel thore,  
*Ligate per fasciculos ad comburendum:*  
 Byndeth hem in knucchenes forthi  
 To brenne lyk to licchi,

<sup>1</sup> Morris, p. 42.

<sup>2</sup> Thorpe, II, p. 333.

<sup>3</sup> Thorpe, I, p. 527.

Spous-breakers with lechours,  
 Rauisschers with rauisschers,  
 Wikked with wikked also. . . .

And again, Aelfric says: "The miserable guilty ones shall suffer torment in everlasting fire, and yet that swart fire shall give them no light. Worms shall tear their bodies with fiery teeth, as Christ said in His gospel, 'There their worms shall never die, nor their fire be quenched.' Here shall be associated in one torment those who in life were united in evil deeds, so that murderers shall eternally be tortured together; and adulterers with adulterers, the rapacious with the rapacious, robbers with robbers, perjurers with perjurers, in the broad flame without any ending shall perish. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth; for their eyes shall be tormented in the great burning, and their teeth shall afterwards quake in the intense cold."<sup>1</sup>

This physical explanation of the weeping and gnashing of teeth is refreshingly novel, and finds an echo in the *Vision of Tundale*, sect. 7. In this passage, too, we again meet with the oft-mentioned double torment of extreme cold and heat.

The homilies of the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries are full of descriptions of hell which tally closely with those of the visions. A single example will suffice. The following passage is from the *Soul's Ward*, a twelfth century homily (compare Morris, *O. E. Homilies*, First Ser., p. 250):

Hell is wide without measure, and deep and bottomless; full of incomparable fire, for no earthly fire may be compared therewith. Full of stench intolerable, for no living thing on earth might endure it. Full of unutterable sorrow, for no mouth may, on account of the wretchedness and woe thereof, give an account of nor tell about it. Yea, the darkness therein is so thick that one may grasp it, for the *fire there gives no light, but blindeth the eyes of them that are there with a smothering smoke, the worst of smokes*. And nevertheless in that same black darkness they see black things as devils, that ever maul them and afflict them . . . ; and tailed dragons, horrible as devils, that *devour them whole and spew them out afterwards; at other times they*

<sup>1</sup>Thorpe, I, p. 133.

rend them to pieces and chew each gobbet of them, and they afterwards become whole again . . . . to undergo again such bale without recovery . . . . loathsome hell-worms, toads and frogs . . . . creep in and out at the mouth, ears, eyes, navel, and at the hollow of the breast, as maggots in putrid flesh. There is shrieking in the flame, and chattering of teeth in the snowy waters. Suddenly they flit from the heat to the cold, nor ever do they know which of the two is worse for them, for each is intolerable. And in this marvelous mingling, the latter, through the former, tormenteth the more. (Compare Milton, p. 59, above.) The fire consumes them all to dead coals; the pitch boileth them until they are altogether melted, and revives them anon to undergo the same, and much worse . . . . to continue in woe, world without end, ever in eternity. . . . I have begun to tell of things that I am not able to bring to any end, though I had a thousand tongues of steel (compare p. 33, above, *St. Paul*) . . . . to endure and to bear their immense blows with steel mallets, and with their red-hot awls, and their buffetings, as though it might be a pitch-clout, each one toward the other, in divers pains. O hell, death's house, abode of woe, of dread, and of groaning; horrid home and hard dwelling of all miseries; city of bale, and the abode of every bitterness, thou most loathsome land of all, thou dark place filled with all dreariness!

The retention of some of the Anglo-Saxon characteristics would seem to point to the Anglo-Saxon homilies as part-model for this passage. The first italicized passage, in particular, unmistakably recalls the passage quoted above from Aelfric. The second passage in italics seems undoubtedly copied from the *Vision of Tundale*, sect. 10.

### 3. THE ANGLO-SAXON PURGATORY.

We have already seen that Bede gave expression to a clearly-defined doctrine of purgatory, as an *abode* for moderately sinful souls in which they would be cleansed by fire of their evil deeds, preparatory to entering upon eternal bliss; this as distinguished from hell, the abode of the eternally damned. On the continent, Gregory I is generally conceded to have been the first definitely to formulate the doctrine, which, in that peculiar form,

is a purely Christian product. The fundamental idea of a probationary state is, however, much older. The Buddhist hells are, strictly speaking, purgatories, since a definite time-limit is always set.

The scriptural passages upon which the doctrine of purgatory rests are *Second Macc.*, XII, 43–46 (which is adduced not merely on the supposition that it is inspired, but even as a simple historical testimony); *Matt.*, XII, 32, “But whoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come;” *First Cor.*, III, 11–15, already referred to; *First Cor.*, XV, 29; also *Psalms*, XXXVIII, 1, and LXV, 12. Besides Gregory, in whom the doctrine is found in all the fullness of its modern detail, direct testimony is given by Tertullian, Cyprian, Arnobius, Lactantius, Hilary, Ambrose, and, above all, Augustine, among the Latins; and by Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Eusebius, Athanasius and others among the Greeks.

It seems strange, in view of the fact that the doctrine, in its more modern form, must have been pretty well known in England in the tenth and eleventh centuries, that we find practically no expression of it in the works of the homilists. Aelfric, in fact, expressly states, “Then will the good be nowhere but in heaven, the evil nowhere but in hell.”<sup>1</sup> We find, to be sure, a few vague intimations of a probationary state: for example, “. . . he will command you to be bound and set in prison, that is, in hell-torment; and then the devil will torture you, *until ye shall have suffered for all your trespasses, until ye come to one farthing.*”<sup>2</sup> But far more frequently eternal torment is the lot of all evil-doers: “the miserable evil-doers shall suffer torment in everlasting fire;” “there their worms shall never die, nor their fire be quenched,”<sup>3</sup> etc.

It has already been said that the Anglo-Saxon poets, following the scriptural statement, conceived of the fires of the judgment-day as purgatorial, and this is the closest approach to a doctrine of an intermediary state which we find in them. The most striking passages in which the purifying quality of the doomsday fire is dwelt upon are the following:

<sup>1</sup> Thorpe, I, p. 527.

<sup>2</sup> Thorpe, I, p. 267.

<sup>3</sup> Thorpe, I, p. 527.

*Crist*, 1102 f.:

ac þæt fyr nimeð þurh foldan gehwæt,  
græfeð grimlice, georne aseceð,  
innan and utan, eorþan sceatas,  
oþþæt eal hafað ældes leoma  
woruld-widles wom wælme forbærned.

Here we have the conception in its widest and most general application; that is, the whole world shall be purified. More particular in reference to souls of men is

*Crist*, 1059 f.:

þonne byrne costað  
hat and heorugifre, hu gehealdne sind  
sawle wið synnum fore sigedeman.

Rather more vaguely the same thought is expressed in

*Phoenix*, 521 f.:

Hat bið monegum  
egeslic æled, þonne anra gehwylc,  
soðfæst ge synnig sawel mid lic,  
from moldgrafum seceð meotudes dom  
forht afæred. Fyr bið on tihte,  
æleð uncyste.

Similar passages occur in the special poems on the judgment-day. But the most remarkable passage of all occurs in the epilogue to the *Elene*. The lines which particularly interest us are 1285 f. The poet is speaking of what will happen on the judgment-day:

þonne on þreo dæleð  
in fyres feng folc anra gehwylc,  
.  
.  
.  
soðfæste bioð  
yfemest in þam ade . . . .  
.  
.  
.  
swa hie adreogan magon  
modigra mægen: him gemetgað eall  
eldes leoma, swa him eðost bið,  
sylfum geseftost. Synfulle beoð  
mane gemengde in þam midle þread,  
hæleð higegeomre in hatne wylm,  
þrosme beþehte. Bið se þridða dæl  
awyrgede womsceaðan in þæs wylmes grund,  
lease leodhatan lige befæsted  
þurh ærgewyrht, arleasra sceolu  
in gleda gripe. Gode no siððan



of þam morðorhofe in gemynd cumað,  
 wuldorcyninge, ac hie worpene beoð  
 of þam heaðuwylme in helle grund  
 torngeniðlan. Bið þam twam dælum  
 ungelice: moton engla frean  
 geseon, sigora god: hie asodene beoð,  
 asundrod fram synnum swa smæte gold,  
 þæt in wylme bið womma gehwylces  
 þurh ofnes fyr eall geclænsod,  
 amered and gemyldt: swa bið þara manna ælc  
 ascyred and asceaden, scylda gehwylcere,  
 deopra firena þurh bæs domes fyr.

It is, of course, impossible to determine with certainty who was Cynewulf's immediate model for this passage. The conception of a three-fold division of mankind in the fires of judgment is several times met with in the works of the church fathers. Gaebler, "Autorschaft vom Phoenix,"<sup>1</sup> cites Augustine's *Sermo*, cxi, in the *Recapitulatio*<sup>2</sup> of which a "sors triplex hominum in iudicio" is dwelt upon. Cook<sup>3</sup> finds a closer parallel in a work of Alcuin's, which would seem to have been modelled upon Augustine. Cook also cites similar passages from Gregory and Bede. The very fact that so many writers dwell upon it, is evidence that the idea was current in the Middle Ages; and it is most probable that Cynewulf, who states merely the bare fact, was drawing from his own memory. Augustine was, no doubt, the first to give expression to the idea.

What we have in the Anglo-Saxon account is briefly this: The souls, on the judgment-day, will be disposed, according to their deeds, in the avenging fire. The good will occupy the uppermost portions of the flame and will escape unscathed; the "sinful" will be placed in the middle; whereas the *womsceaðan*, the *leodhatan*—that is, probably, the perpetrators of capital crimes—will occupy the third and lowest portion of the flame, that is, hell. These last will never attain to blessedness, but the other two divisions are different: these will be purified and refined like gold, and, when cleansed of their sins, be admitted to the abodes of the righteous. Cook says, "to the three-fold

<sup>1</sup> *Anglia*, III, p. 488 f.

<sup>2</sup> Migne, *Pat. Lat.*, 39, col. 1949.

<sup>3</sup> "Date of the *Elena*," *Anglia*, xv, p. 9 f.

division will succeed a two-fold," but, however the patristic accounts may read, the Anglo-Saxon poet can hardly be interpreted to say so. He simply states: "Bið þam twam dælum ungelice," that is, the third section is unlike the other two.

It is particularly interesting to note that we find a three-fold division of souls in two widely-different works, both earlier than Augustine—the *Book of Enoch* and Plutarch's *Vision of Thespesius*, both of which have already been analyzed in their relations to vision-literature. In the *Book of Enoch* we have the following, xxii, 9: "I inquired . . . respecting the general judgment; saying, Why is one separated from another? He answered, Three separations have been made between the spirits of the dead. . . ."

In the *Vision of Thespesius* we have a closer analogue. Good souls are pure white, and undergo no punishment; those whose sins are light—spotted souls—need endure but a short probation of torment; but the great sinners are put to a terrible test of torment. If, after this, they are found to be hopelessly bad, they are then consigned to eternal damnation.<sup>1</sup> The feature occurs in almost identically the same form in the *Vision of Thurcill*. The similarity to the Egyptian judgment has also already been pointed out.<sup>2</sup>

In the *Vision of St. Frances* (*Acta Sanct.*, Mar. 9), purgatory is divided into three distinct compartments: the first, an immense dungeon of ice; the second, a caldron of boiling oil and pitch; the third, a pond of liquid metal.

The picture of souls flying about in the flame also recalls *Thespesius*, *Drihthelm*, *Monk of Eynsham*, and *Thurcill*, and, in a less degree, *Furseus*.

These similarities may be mere coincidences, but it is very probable that we have in them another indication of the organic way in which the Anglo-Saxon conceptions of hell, etc., are connected with continental accounts. Here at least there can be no question of a survival of the traditions of Germanic mythology.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 28, above.

<sup>2</sup> Above, p. 16.

## III. THE MIDDLE-ENGLISH VISIONS.

## 1. THE VISION OF ST. PAUL.

*Bibliographical Summary.*

The original work was written in Greek, in at least two versions belonging to the fourth century, A. D. Only one has come down to us. The other is mentioned by Epiphanius, under the title 'Αναβατικὸν Παύλου, in his work against eighty heresies (Migne, *Pat. Gr.*, xli, col. 656), and, after him, by Michael Glycas, *Annal.*, 2, 120. The extant version is described by St. Augustine (ninety-eighth tract upon the Gospel of St. John: Migne, *Pat. Lat.*, xxxv, col. 188), in this sentence: "Qua occasione vani quidam apocalypsim Pauli, quam sana non recipit Ecclesia, nesqui quibus fabulis plenam, stultissima praesumptione finxerunt." This version is probably represented by the text published by Tischendorf (*Apocalypses Apocryphae*, pages 34-69; xiv-xviii), from a fifteenth century MS. at Milan, collated with a thirteenth century MS. at Munich. It is accompanied by a translation into English of an ancient Syriac MS. by Rev. Justin Perkins. (Reprinted from the *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, vi. A German translation by Zingerle appeared in *Heidenheims Vierteljahrschrift*, iv, 139-183). Herman Brandes, *Englische Studien*, vii, p. 36 f., mentions twenty-two MSS. containing Latin versions of the vision; these he divides into six redactions. Other MSS. in Latin are mentioned by Paul Meyer, *Romania*, xxiv, p. 357, who also gives a list of French MSS. Up to the present time there have been published five English metrical versions, representing four different redactions. Brandes made a study of these in their relation to French and Latin versions in his essay, "Ueber die Quellen der mittelenglischen Versionen der Paulusvision," republished in *Englische Studien*, vii. Ward, *Catalogue of Romances*, ii, p. 397 f., describes nine Latin MSS. in the British Museum.

The following are the English metrical versions (Brandes' redactions):

I. c. 1300. MS. Laud 108 (compare Horstmann, *Altenglische Legenden*, p. x). Bodleian Library. It is written in six-lined

strophes, third and sixth line having three stresses, the others four. The rime is a b c c b. The dialect is Southern. Published by Horstmann, *Herrigs Archiv*, LII, p. 35 f.

II. (a) latter half thirteenth century. Jesus College MS. 29; composed in short rimed couplets, South-west dialect. Published by Morris, *An Old English Miscellany* (*E. E. T. S.*, 49), p. 147 f.

(b) 1304 (Warton) or c. 1290 (Horstmann). Digby MS. 86. Bodleian Library. Same as II (a). Southern dialect. Published by Horstmann, *Herrigs Archiv*, LXII, pages 403–406.

III. (a) c. 1375. Vernon MS. Bodleian Library. Written in short rimed couplets. Southern dialect (Horstmann). Published by Morris, *An O. E. Miscellany*, Appendix III, p. 223 f., and by Horstmann, *Englische Studien*, I, pages 293–299.

(III. (b) end of fourteenth century. British Museum additional MS. 22283, containing a word for word transcription of first 124 lines of Vernon MS. version. Unpublished).

IV. 1426. Douce MS. 302. Bodleian Library. Composed in thirteen-lined strophes, with the rime: a b a b b c b c d e e e d. It is signed by John Audelay:

For al is good that hath good end.  
Thus counsels you the blynd Audlay.

Halliwell does not include the poem in his collection of Audelay's poems (*The Poems of John Audelay*, ed. Halliwell, London, 1844: *Percy Society Publications*). Published by Morris, *An O. E. Miscellany*, Appendix II, pages 210–212.

A prose English version of the vision is printed by Morris, *Old English Homilies*, First Series, p. 41. Also by Zupitza, *Alt- und Mittelenglisches Uebungsbuch*, Second Edition, pages 62–65 (fifth edition, 1897, p. 88).

The French versions were first enumerated by Paul Meyer, *Romania*, VI, p. 11. He found five. Three of these are more closely examined by Brandes, *Englische Studien*, VII, p. 51 f. One of these three was printed by Ozanam, *Dante et la Philosophie Catholique au XIII<sup>ème</sup> Siecle*, p. 425 f. Ward describes two French versions in the British Museum: one by Adam de Ros, in 427 octosyllabic lines; the other in 579 lines, consisting of 530 alexandrines, arranged in mono-rimed quatrains, together

with 49 octosyllabic lines in the middle, occurring after the eighth alexandrine. Final enumeration of MSS. by Paul Meyer, *Romania*, xxiv.

It would be without the limits of the present study to compare the Greek, Latin, French, and English versions. This has, moreover, already been satisfactorily done by Brandes in the article above cited (*E. S.*, vii). The "bridge of judgment" does not occur in the original Greek, which corresponds far more closely than the Latin versions to the *Apocalypse of Peter*. Thus, for example, the "blood pool" of Peter remains such in the Greek, but becomes a fire-lake in the Latin versions.

A Latin version of our vision, following very closely the original Greek, and belonging to the eighth century, was published by Mr. M. R. James in Vol. II of *Texts and Studies* (Cambridge, 1893). Compare further, P. Meyer, *Romania*, xxiv, p. 358.

### *Synopsis of Contents.*

(NOTE.—The Vernon and Douce copies agree very closely, and probably had the same original. The Jesus Coll. version has many variants from them. Laud 108 is short, and presents no new features.)

*Vernon*.—1. Burning trees at hell's gates. Sinners suspended thereon from various portions of the body.

2. A burning caldron, with seven flames of different colors.

3. Seven pains: snow, ice, fire, blood, adders, lightning (?), stench. Souls who would do no penance were here tormented according to their deeds. They desired to die, but could not.

4. Burning wheel, turned a thousand times a day, and at each turn a thousand souls are tormented (Jesus Coll., wheel of steel, with sharp spikes).

5. Horrible flood, with many devilish beasts therein, which gnawed the souls without mercy.

6. Very high bridge over the flood: righteous men pass unscathed; sinners fall down from it, and are bound together in bundles, like to like.

7. Souls immersed in the flood to various portions of the body which were most sinful. Backbiters are immersed to the knees; adulterers, to the navel; talkers in church, to the lips; such as were glad of their neighbor's misfortune, to the eyebrows, etc.

8. Souls gnawing their own tongues. (Jesus Coll., 10,000 fiends gnaw the tongues of usurers.)

9. Black maidens, clad in black clothing, boiling in pitch and brimstone, with reptiles about their necks, and four angels of hell, with burning horns, tormenting them. These were unchaste, and destroyed their offspring.

10. Souls with meat before them, which they could not eat. These would not fast. (Old man weeping between four yelling devils. He was negligent and unchaste.)

11. Pit sealed with seven seals. A terrible stench proceeds from it. Whoever comes in here shall never find mercy. Here are those who did not believe in the incarnation of Christ, and would not receive baptism. They are devoured by worms, etc. (Jesus Coll., hungry hounds.) (A sinful soul which had just left the body was borne up by seven devils. He had read his own charter—also found in Laud 108—and thereby judged himself. The devils hurl him into the darkest abyss for having violated the commandments. Every man shall be repaid according to his deeds. Next came a righteous soul, who was led to heaven amid rejoicing of the angels.)

12. The souls in hell then prayed Paul and Michael to intercede for them. These do so, and a respite is granted the sinful ones from Saturday till Monday of every week, Christ first reproving them in the words of *Matt.*, xxv, 41 f.

*Additional Features from Jesus Coll. MS.*—1. Souls who robbed the poor, etc., are drawn in two by fiends, and one half is placed in fire, the other half in a “frozen fen.”

2. Stream mixed with blood.

3. Old men among stinging adders. After being fretted to pieces, they are made whole again, that the torment may be renewed. Four devils stand by and torture them. They would not pity the poor (evidently an expansion from the feature of the single old man in the Vernon MS. version, sect. 10).

4. Deep gaol, with hot pool. Ten thousand devils and more torment the souls of the damned with awls. These doomed Christ to death.

5. An “iron wall” full of the souls of those that were beheaded or hanged, etc.

*Discussion.*

The large majority of the Latin MSS. of our vision belong to the thirteenth century—no earlier; whereas all but one of the English versions are of the fourteenth century. Nevertheless, though the MSS. of all the other works which are yet to be treated bear dates as early, or earlier, we must in every case give *Paul* priority. The thirteenth century was the flourishing period of vision-literature, and was fertile in remodellings of old material as well as in the invention of new. *Paul* differs from the other visions in question from the fact that it represents a development, or, rather, a growth. The late medieval vision of the thirteenth century bears little resemblance to the crude work of the fourth, and yet it is always the same work, enriched in the former instance by many new features which were attached to it by successive generations of narrators, and finally crystallized with, no doubt, still other additions by the writers of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The other visions, on the contrary, though they embodied much old material, molded it into a new form, gave it a new name and a new locality, and thus lent it the semblance, at least, of originality and newness.

It would prove a thankless task to attempt to determine exactly what new elements were added to the Pauline vision by its thirteenth century resuscitators. It is a simple matter enough, of course, to compare the original Greek version with the late rehandlings, but we gain but little by doing so, since it in nowise assists us in discovering what features were picked up during the intervening centuries, and what were added from the scribes' own memories.

The earliest Greek version of the vision is usually assigned to the fourth century, A. D. That it is no later we know from the historical notices of the work. It may be earlier; it undoubtedly was modelled upon the *Apocalypse of Peter*. That it was a well-known book, even accepted by some as a genuine work of the apostle, is amply testified to by frequent references to it, and arguments concerning it, as late as the eleventh century. It is reasonable to suppose that it was, during this time, constantly receiving new features from other works; for visions kept spring-

ing up sporadically all through the centuries which preceded their flourishing period. Thus, though we possess but few literary evidences of the fact, the spark which burst into flame in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries had never really been extinct, but had simply been biding the time when the condition of men's minds should enable it to shine with the greatest lustre. And there can, I think, be but little doubt that the *Vision of St. Paul* existed by virtue of oral tradition, in much the same form in which we have it in the late manuscripts, many years before it was committed to writing; and therefore it must be given priority to *St. Patrick's Purgatory*, for example, which resembles it so very closely in point of detail.

Brandes has made a careful study of the relation of the English versions of the vision to the Latin and French, and I shall, therefore, pass on immediately to a consideration of the material which we find in the English versions, and which, of course, reflects the Latin texts. Most of the analogues to other works have already been pointed out as occasion required, so that the following is practically a mere summing up of the evidence.

1. The burning trees occur in the *Vision of Alberic* (p. 43, above), and in several medieval oriental works (p. 14, above). I have been unable to trace them to their ultimate source. They seem to be original with the Pauline vision. As has been said (pages 35-36, above), they may possibly have existed in the *Apocalypse of Peter*, though lost to our fragment. They do not appear in the Greek version of *Paul* which we possess, but spring up in the earliest Latin texts.

2. The burning caldron is a common feature throughout eastern and western accounts. Seven seems to have been a favorite, and in many cases an indefinite number. In *Paul* especially everything is reckoned by sevens: seven pains, seven flames, pit with seven seals, sinful soul driven by seven devils (compare with later seven deadly sins, seven cardinal virtues). In the *Vision of Thespesius* different crimes are denoted by different colors (p. 28, above. Compare also *St. Patrick's Purgatory*, sect. 11, below).



3. The seven pains were, no doubt, originally designed as an index to all the torments of hell, but were later combined into a single mode of punishment. They are condensed to four in *Tundale*, sect. 7. Snow, ice, and fire are the customary paradox (above, p. 11; *Drihthelm*, p. 53; *Aelfric*, p. 68); blood is an echo of the *Apocalypse of Peter* (p. 38, above); whereas adders and stench are invariable attributes of all hells, East or West.

4. The burning wheel is not so common a feature as one might expect. It occurs in *St. Patrick's Purgatory*, sect. 5, and in several of the more modern oriental accounts.

5. The horrible flood is a feature of universal occurrence (see p. 37, above). We have it in just this form, with the serpents, and spanned by the bridge, in *Tundale*, sect. 8, and in *St. Patrick's Purgatory*, sect. 10.

6. For recurrence of the bridge in vision-literature, see p. 17, above. For punishment of like with like, see p. 37.

7. Immersion to various portions of the body is an outgrowth from *Apocalypse of Peter*, 11 (see p. 38, above). Assigning an appropriate punishment to every crime is a principle which is carefully observed in the *Apocalypse of Peter*, and in the earlier versions of *Paul* (see p. 36 f., above).

8. This is borrowed from the *Apocalypse of Peter*, 14 (p. 39, above).

9. For the significance of black clothing, see p. 32, above. The feature, in just this form, seems to be original with the *Vision of St. Paul*. Devils have iron horns in the Anglo-Saxon hell, *SS.*, 941 f. (p. 61, above).

10. The punishment of child-murderesses is emphasized in the *Apocalypse of Peter* (p. 38, above) and in the *Vision of Alberic* (p. 43). The Jesus Coll. version tells us that the souls before whom the meat was placed, but who could not touch it, were "sore of-thrust and ful hongri." Vernon leaves the nature of the punishment rather vague. We have here, of course, a reflection of the Tantalus myth.

11. This is the famous pit of hell. Whoever enters here shall never receive grace—a striking fore-runner of Dante's *Lasciate ogni speranza voi ch'entrate!* We are, therefore, to distinguish

this feature from all the preceding ones, which together constitute purgatory.

Little need be said of the additional features in the Jesus Coll. MS. In 1. we have the contrasted torments more clearly brought out than in Vernon. 2. reflects the original Greek and the *Apocalypse of Peter* more nearly. The stream of blood becomes, as we have seen, a stream of fire in most versions. Compare also *Vision of Alberic*, p. 44, above. 3. is elaborated still further in *Tundale*, sect. 10. 4. is a new feature peculiar to *Paul*, and, no doubt, a late medieval addition. 5. The iron wall is rather mysterious, and is probably due to some error.

## 2. THE VISION OF TUNDALE.

### *Bibliographical Summary.*

Wagner, *Visio Tnugdali*, Erlangen, 1882, in which he prints a Latin version of this vision on the basis of the seven oldest MSS., mentions fifty-four widely-distributed MSS. which contain the Latin text. These all belong between the twelfth and fifteenth centuries. Forty of them are in Germany and Austria, while England and Ireland have six between them. One or the other of them have been printed in, 1. Helinand of Froidmont's *Chronicle*: Migne, *Pat. Lat.*, cccxvii, 1038 f.; 2. Vincent of Beauvais' *Speculum Historiale*, Bk. xxvii, ch. 88; 3. Edmond Martene, *Thesaurus Novus Anecdotorum*, i, col. 490 (1717). The author calls himself "pater Marcus" in a prologue contained in six twelfth century MSS. His identity is doubtful (compare, for discussion, Ward, *Catalogue of Romances*, ii, p. 416 f.). In the fullest Latin texts the introduction of Marcus is followed by a fervid description of Ireland.

An English metrical version, composed in octosyllabic rimed couplets, is contained in the following MSS., all belonging to the fifteenth century:

- I. Edinburgh MS. Advocates Library, 19, 3, 1.
- II. Cotton MS. Caligula A II.
- III. Royal MS. 17. B XLIII.
- IV. Ashmole MS., No. 1491 (Bodleian Library): two fragments:

(a) ll. 2307–2326, upon which follow ll. 115–386.

(b) ll. 700–1165.

There have been two editions :

1843. W. B. Turnbull, *The Vision of Tundale*, etc. Prints III. Very rare.

1893. A. Wagner, *Das Mittelenglische Gedicht ueber die Vision des Tundalus*, Halle. Prints composite text, based upon III.

A small portion of II. was published by Wuelker, *Altenglisches Lesebuch*, II, 1, p. 17 f.

Wagner has made a laudable attempt to establish the inter-relationship of the English MSS., but has failed. For reviews of his work, see *Anglia*, *Beiblatt*, IV, p. 129 (Holthausen), and *Eng. Stud.*, XIX, p. 269 (Kaluza).

The *Vision of Tundale* was, perhaps, the best known, as it is undoubtedly the most elaborate, of all the medieval visions. In addition to the numerous Latin MSS., there is a large number of French, German, Italian, and even Icelandic ones. Ward describes one French version in the British Museum (Cott. Tiber. Add'l 9771), which is a translation of the Latin text used by Vincent de Beauvais. He also mentions a Latin version copied by an Italian, with a short introduction in that language. Mussafia prints one Italian version in Vol. XIX of *Il Propugnatore*. Compare also same author, "Sulla Visione di Tundalo," *Phil. Hist. Classe*, Vol. LXVII, p. 158.

The Middle High German version was edited together with the composite Latin text by Wagner. The earliest work on the vision was done by Schade, *Visio Thugdali*, Halle, 1869. For a Scandinavian version compare Unger, "Duggals Leizla," in *Heil. Manna Sögur*, p. 329, Christiania, 1877.

The date ascribed to the vision in its prologue is 1149.

### *Synopsis of Contents.*

1. Tundale, a wealthy land-owner, falls into a trance while trying to exact payment from a tenant.

2. When his soul leaves the body, it finds itself in a murky place, surrounded by a crowd of wicked demons with black bodies. Flames proceeded from their mouths; they had great horns and

pronged tails. Their nails were as hard as ground steel. They threaten and revile Tundale.

3. A bright star appears in the distance, which proves to be Tundale's guardian angel. With him he proceeds on his journey. 220

4. A dark valley, filled with foul stench, the ground strewn with glowing coals, over which is spread a sheet of iron, which the flames penetrate. Murderers are placed hereon, and are molten like wax. In this state they trickle through the iron, after which they again resume their shape, only to endure the same torment over again. 315

5. Great mountain full of smoke and fire on one side; ice, frost, snow, and wind, on the other. Thieves and robbers are tossed alternately from one to the other. 357

6. Deep, dark abyss, from which proceeds a terrible stench. Here proud men and braggarts are punished. Tundale is led safely over the narrow bridge which spans it. 393

7. A monstrous beast, in whose mouth 9,000 armed men might ride. This was Acharon, who swallows the souls of covetous men. Here Tundale experiences his first torment. He suffers from adders, fire, ice, stench. The tears of his eyes burn as fire. 440

8. Terrible lake, full of horrible beasts; spanned by a narrow bridge, thickly strewn with sharp spikes. It is two miles long, but has scarcely the breadth of a hand. Those that fall from the bridge are at once devoured by the monsters in the lake. Thus are robbers punished. Tundale is required to lead a cow, which he had stolen, over the bridge. 550

9. A house built like an oven, with stinking flames proceeding from it. Here fiends, armed with all kinds of weapons, cut off various portions of the bodies of gluttons. Sometimes they are chopped into little bits. Here a homily on the nature of purgatory is introduced. 697

10. Frozen lake, in the centre of which is a great beast, with terrible black wings. His mouth is full of fire. Into it the souls of unrighteous men of religion are hurled, and when almost wasted away by the heat, they are plunged into the frozen lake. They are furthermore tormented by adders, which pierce their way outwards from every portion of the body. 857

980 11. Through a dark, narrow way they come to a deep ravine full of smiths with great hammers in their hands. Souls are first raised to the right temperature in a fire fanned by great bellows. They are then hammered out on an anvil, after which they recover their original shapes, and are passed on to the next smiths, who tear them with hooks and tongs. Vulcan is the master of the smiths.

1154 12. Deep ditch, from which stinking flames shoot out. Burning pillar, which almost reaches heaven, rises from the pit. Up and down this pillar souls and devils are flying. When the souls are burned to ashes, they drop into the pit, where they recover, only to be burned again.

11285 13. Torture-chamber of Satan. Description of the arch-fiend. He is immensely "broad and thick." When he yawns he swallows a thousand souls at once. He is bound down in hard bonds. He has 1,000 hands, and 20 fingers on each. His tail is sharp and of great length. He lies on burning coals. He seizes souls in his hands and crushes them as one would crush grapes to get the juice; after which he drops them into the fire. Every time he sighs a thousand souls are exhaled. His own torments are, however, the most harrowing of all. Story of the fall of the angels, followed by another short homily. Tundale is led over a high wall into a place as light as day.

1185 14. Many souls suffering hunger and thirst. These have no positive crimes to pay for, but did no good. They will all be saved.

1110 15. Earthly Paradise: place full of fair flowers and sweet smells. In the midst of it is a well: fountain of youth, and immunity from hunger and thirst.

1111 16. House of gold, studded with precious stones. Within, a golden throne, upon which sat King Cormake (Cornale). Large crowds of bright-robed people bring him gifts and do him homage. But for three hours every day he must suffer torment, standing in fire up to his middle, because he broke his marriage vow.

1172 17. Passing a silver wall, they come upon many souls clad in white. These were the chaste and generous.

1180 18. A golden wall; within, many thrones of gold and precious stones. Holy men, and martyrs for Christ. Automatic musical

instruments make melody, and blessed souls sing in harmony with them. Sweet smells abound.

19. Beautiful, very high tree, laden with all kinds of fruits, flowers, herbs, and spices, while many birds perch in its branches. Beneath it, many men and women live in golden cells, each with a crown on his or her head. The tree is holy church; those beneath it, her supporters. 2 000

20. A wall of precious stones. Within are the nine orders of angels, the Trinity, and God in His Majesty. Many saints are also here. 2 067

After a sight of this, Tundale's soul returns to its body.

### Discussion.

The *Vision of Tundale* is by far the most detailed and systematically sustained of any which we possess. The author seems to have made it a point to gather together into an elaborate whole all the features of the entire remaining corpus of visions. There is hardly an incident in any other work which is not introduced, generally with numerous embellishments, into this epic of torment. The author's borrowings from the Greek and Latin are evident from the introduction of proper names, such as Acheron and Vulcan; we have echoes of Irish history in the fate of King Cormake or Cornale. That he made use of several sources is evidenced by the two-fold introduction of the bridge (sects. 6, 8)—no doubt originally the same bridge in both cases. The cow which Tundale is forced to lead over the bridge is probably an original interpolation, as are the homilies in sections 9 and 13. Especially noteworthy are the undoubted borrowings from the *Vision of Thespesius*. Sect. 10 reminds one most forcibly of Satan in the *Inferno*; in fact, there are several striking points of similarity between *Tundale* and both the *Vision of Alberic* and the *Divina Commedia*. The *Vision of Tundale* is further of distinctive interest, in that it differentiates hell (2-13); purgatory (14); a region corresponding to the earthly paradise (15); paradise (18-19); and heaven (20). The space devoted to purgatory is, to be sure, very small, but the statement that the souls "will all be saved" unmistakably establishes its identity. The earthly

paradise is the neutral place, without pain, but also without positive delights.

Surveying now briefly the individual sections, we have in 1. the customary vision concomitants, though detailed with considerably greater definiteness than in the majority of visions. In sect. 2 we have a more accurate description than we have yet met with of the outward appearance of the demons of hell. That they are black we already learned from the *Apocalypse of Peter*, 6. They are provided with horns in *Paul* (sect. 9). The Anglo-Saxon hell, we have seen (p. 61, above), was peopled with *atol deor monig irenum hornum*. We have a remarkable parallel to the nails, hard as ground steel, in *Beowulf*, l. 984 f.:

was

steda nægla gehwylc style gelicost  
hæpenes handspora. . . .

though the similarity is probably merely a coincidence. Sect. 3 seems to be a borrowing from *Drihtelm* (p. 53, above); Tundale's guide also deserts him at critical moments, as in Bede's story (compare also *Vision of Thespesius*). Sect. 4: The dark valley first appears in the *Book of Enoch*, LII, 1 (p. 24); but it is so indefinite and universal a feature that it is unnecessary to look for an ultimate source. To the iron floor, etc., we have already noted oriental parallels (p. 11). Sect. 5 seems directly borrowed from the *Vision of Drihtelm*. Sect. 6 is here out of place. The stinking pit is almost invariably reserved till the last (it is again introduced later on in *Tundale*), and it is never spanned by a bridge. Sect. 7: The poet is here somewhat mixed up in his classical terminology. We have frequently met with variations of the Cerberus myth in the visions; also in the Anglo-Saxon hell (p. 62, above). The four torments seem to be a condensation of the seven in *Paul* (sect. 3). The burning eyes remind us of Aelfric (p. 68, above). Sect. 8 requires no special comment. The cow, as has been said, is probably original with *Tundale*. Sect. 9: The house is possibly the "bath-house" of *St. Patrick's Purgatory* (sect. 6). The process of cutting off various portions of the body we have already encountered in the Buddhist hells (p. 10), and in Dante. Sect. 10 recalls most forcibly Dante's frozen lake, with Satan in its centre. Indeed,

it is most probable that Dante made immediate use of both sects. 9 and 10 of *Tundale*. Here again we have the torments of heat and cold alternating. Sect. 11: The episode of the smiths is taken bodily from the *Vision of Thespesius* (p. 29, above). The fact of the souls recovering their original shapes after being mutilated was already noticed in the Buddhist hells (p. 11 f.). Sect. 12: This is evidently the mouth of hell; see *Vision of Alberic* (p. 44, above); *St. Paul* (sect. 11), etc. The burning pillar may have originated with *Enoch*, XVIII, 13, or XXI, 5 (p. 23, above): "Columns of fire." Souls flying up and down in the flame recalls *Thespesius*, Dante, *Monk of Eynsham*, *Drihthelm*, and *Thurcill*. Sect. 13: We have here an extravagant description of Satan—no doubt the model for many subsequent ones. Satan is very commonly represented as lying on burning coals. The simile of the grapes is not original with *Tundale*. In and exhaling souls / recurs in the *Vision of Alberic*, and in Dante (compare p. 46). Sect. 15: The earthly paradise contains the fountain of youth of the voyages, and of many romances. Compare for earthly paradise especially *St. Patrick's Purgatory*, sect. 11, f. Sects. 16 to 20 furnish a comparatively detailed description of the various abodes of the blessed, separated from one another by walls, the materials of which become ever more precious as the abodes which they partition become more blessed. The walls are an expansion of the crystal wall of *Enoch*, XIV, 10 (p. 22), and which recurs in the *Vision of the Monk of Eynsham*, sect. 8. In that vision, too, there is a similar division of the blessed into three parts (compare further p. 71 f, above). Sect. 19: The tree is the tree of *Enoch*, XXIV, 3 (p. 24), and of many subsequent accounts.

### 3. ST. PATRICK'S PURGATORY.

#### *Bibliographical Summary.*

The most exhaustive study of the MSS., etc., of this legend is by E. Koelbing, *Englische Studien*, I, pages 57–121. The most detailed Latin version is preserved in a large number of MSS. See, for those in the British Museum, Ward, *Catalogue of Romances*, II, p. 435 f. For discussion of authorship ("frater . . . . H.



There are three Middle-English versions of the legend contained in the following MSS. and editions:

- Composed in septenaries. Published by Horstmann, *Altenglische Legenden*, Paderborn, 1875, pages 149–211. Also Horstmann, *MS. Laud* 108: *E. S. E. Leg.* (*E. E. T. S.*, No. 87).

- III. XV c. Contained only in MS. Cott. Calig. A II. Composed in rimed couplets. Extracts in Wright, *St. Patrick's Purgatory*, p. 64 f.

For Brome MS., see *Eng. Stud.*, ix.

*Synopsis of Contents.*

1. Sir Owen finds himself in a dimly-lighted hall, surrounded by pillars and arches. He is met by fifteen men in white garments, who warn him that he will be attacked by fiends. These will try to frighten him back, and if they fail in that, will carry him away to their places of torment; but he will escape if he never forgets God, and if he calls, in his utmost need, upon the name of Christ. Sir Owen is then left alone.

2. Fiends rush up, taunt him, but promise to let him go back in safety. Sir Owen does not answer them.

3. Sir Owen is thrown into a great fire. He invokes the name of Christ, and is released. He is then led through a dark region, where he can see nothing but the demons who lead him. A wind which he can scarcely hear yet penetrates his body with its sharpness.

4. The four fields of torment :

(a) Souls pinned down face foremost on the ground, with red-hot nails of iron piercing hands and feet. Demons beat them unmercifully.

(b) Souls pinned down with their backs to the ground. Fiery dragons lacerate them with hot teeth. Toads of great size are on the breasts of some. These souls also are beaten with whips.

(c) Souls pinned down with so many iron nails that not sufficient of their bodies is left uncovered with them for the admission of a finger-tip. These try to talk, but cannot. They are further tormented by a cold but burning wind.

(d) Many fires in which souls are suspended: some by iron chains, by feet or hands, or hair or arms, etc. Some were immersed in sulphurous flames; others were roasted on griddles, or turned on spits, or basted with molten metal. Demons constantly beat them. Here Sir Owen recognized some of his former friends. No tongue can tell the torments of these.

5. Fiery wheel, surrounded by flames. Men were attached to it with iron spikes. One half of the wheel was in the air, the other dipped into the ground.

6. Great house, immeasurably large, smoking horribly. This was a "bath-house." It was full of divers molten metals, in

which souls were "bathed." Some were immersed to the eyebrows; others, to the eyes, to the lips, to the neck, to the breast, to the navel, to the thighs, to the knees, to the calves. Some had only one foot in the bath; others, only one hand, or both hands.

7. Proceeding from the house, they go upon a high mountain. Looking down, Sir Owen perceives many shivering souls. As he is wondering at the sight, a violent wind suddenly arises from the North(-east), which drives all—demons, Sir Owen, and the souls—into a fetid and icy river.

8. They go toward the South. Horrible pit, full of stinking flames, in which men are driven up and down, like sparks from a furnace. None who enter here, the demons tell Sir Owen, shall ever come out. He is hurled into it by the fiends. Upon calling upon Christ, he is spewed out by the flame upon the brink of the pit. The demons tell him they had lied to him: the pit was not hell, but they would now lead him thither.

9. Torrent of burning sulphur, very broad and fetid. Below this is hell.

10. Over the torrent is a dizzy bridge, very high, thin and slippery. Sir Owen is forced to pass over it. He calls on Christ, and the bridge broadens at his every step, so that, when he reaches the other side, he is unable to see where it stops.

11. *Earthly Paradise.* Sir Owen, after crossing the bridge, sees before him a high wall, beautifully adorned, and studded with precious stones. As he approaches, a door in the wall opens a little, and most wonderful perfumes are wafted to him. He here sees the various ecclesiastical orders. He is received into their company, and a bishop tells him that he (Owen) had passed through purgatory, as had all those present. Souls are clad in garments of different colors: some in gold, others in green, purple, blue, white, etc., according to the degree of virtue which they possess. This was the earthly paradise, from which Adam had been ejected for his disobedience.

12. Sir Owen is led upon a high mountain, and sees the gate of heaven. Heavenly food descends upon him in the form of a flame. Sir Owen partakes of it, but is compelled to return to earth.

*Discussion.*

In *St. Patrick's Purgatory* we encounter at least one feature which we have not yet met with in the visions. Sir Owen visits purgatory in the flesh, as Ulysses and Aeneis and Orpheus did. We are not, however, to suppose that the original writer of the legend modelled himself upon classical antiquity in this particular. The legend may, indeed, primarily have been stimulated by the cave of which it treats; but, once the awe and curiosity of the people was aroused by it, the legend underwent a change of function, and became a stimulus for the cave, for such is undoubtedly the external history of this "put in Irlande." Having obtained a reputation as an entrance to purgatory, it was only to be expected that so important a place should be put into the keeping of the clergy. The clergy—possibly in all sincerity, for there is no reason to assume that Irish priests were less superstitious than Irish laymen—speedily spread reports of the wonderful character of the cave, shrouded it in a mantle of delightful mystery, and peopled it with definite horrors. But as the cave was a real thing, it would obviously not answer to have its horrors proclaimed through the medium of a vision seen by the soul only. This would be too incongruous a confusion of reality with unreality—of the actual world with the visionary. The public might—probably would—refuse to identify the vague abode visited by the soul of some visionary with their very material cave, and, therefore, we are given the unique figure of Sir Owen.

As regards the purgatory itself, we have in it all the characteristic elements of a medieval vision. *St. Patrick's Purgatory* resembles the *Vision of Tundale*, in that Tundale also was made to undergo some of the torments of which he was witness. Furseus, too, it will be remembered, had his arm and shoulder burned. But, taking the work as a whole, it seems nearly certain that the writer took for his immediate model some version of the *Vision of St. Paul*, introducing a few additional features, especially from the *Vision of Drihthelm*, and the *Vision of Tundale*. This will appear from the following consideration of the individual sections.

Sect. 1: Whether there is any special significance to be attached to the fact that there are *fifteen* men, I have been unable to determine. In the romances the favorite number for a small company is twelve—perhaps a reminiscence of the twelve apostles. The men are clad in the customary white garments, which at once lends them a supernatural character. This whole section is peculiar to *St. Patrick's Purgatory*. To invoke the name of Christ when in great need was a common procedure, but we do not often meet with it in the visions. Sect. 3: The great fire is a universal feature. The "dark region" we are also familiar with. It appears in *Enoch*, *Tundale* (sect. 4), *Drihtelm* (which may be the immediate source for *St. Patrick's Purgatory*), *Monk of Eynsham* (sect. 5), and frequently elsewhere. The cold wind, too, we have met with in the Anglo-Saxon hell and elsewhere. Sect. 4 *a* recalls the sixth Buddhist hell (p. 21, above). Compare also Dante, Canto *xxiii*, the punishment of Caiaphas. 4 *b*, *c*, are merely variations upon 4 *a*, probably original with the author of *St. Patrick's Purgatory*. The cold and burning wind (sect. 4 *c*) presents the familiar anomaly in a somewhat new form. 4 *d* presents the very common features of suspension from, and immersion to, various portions of the body. For analogues, compare note on *Apocalypse of Peter*, 7 (p. 35, above). The immediate source for *St. Patrick's Purgatory* for this incident was, I am inclined to believe, the *Vision of St. Paul*. Roasting, basting, and turning on spits are possibly features of oriental origin. *Thespesius* (p. 27, above), recognizes his father; Dante meets many acquaintances. It is a common feature.—"No tongue can tell," etc., compare note on *Apocalypse of Peter*, 3 (p. 32, above). Sect. 5: The fiery wheel seems undoubtedly to have been borrowed from *Paul* (sect. 4). Sect. 6: The "bath-house" may, as has been said, be copied from *Tundale* (sect. 9). Different degrees of immersion we already met with in sect. 4 *d*, above. Sect. 7: Ascension of mountains is a common procedure. Compare, for example, *Apocalypse of Peter*, 2 (p. 31, above); *Furseus* (p. 51, above), etc. Visions of heaven are very commonly had from such a point of vantage. In the Faust books, for instance, the Doctor ascends a mountain, and has a sight of the earthly paradise.—The wind from the north-east is probably from the *Vision of*

*Drihthelm*. The icy river is possibly a borrowing from *Tundale* (sect. 10).—Sect. 8 presents a commixture of various features. The pit is undoubtedly the pit of hell, which we are familiar with through *Paul* and other visions. In *St. Patrick's Purgatory* the pit is, to be sure, made a part of purgatory, but only, as it would appear, upon second thought, since the devils are forced to acknowledge a falsehood in order to permit of the mention of the real hell under the river (sect. 9). With this exception, the pit is identical with the one in *Paul* (sect. 11).—Souls flit about in the flame similarly in *Thespesius* (p. 27, above), *Drihthelm* (p. 53, above), *Tundale* (sect. 12), *Monk of Eynsham* (sect. 5), and elsewhere.—Sect. 9 is interesting chiefly from the peculiar position which is assigned to hell, being a remarkable echo of *Enoch*, LXVI, 6 (p. 24, above). Compare also note on *Apocalypse of Peter*, 6. Sect. 10: In *St. Patrick's Purgatory*, the bridge is identical with the Mohammedan al Sirat (compare p. 18, above), not only in point of resemblance to detail, but also in position, in that it spans hell, linking purgatory with the earthly paradise, corresponding to earth and heaven, respectively, in the Mohammedan account.—For recurrence of the bridge of judgment in the visions, compare p. 18, above. *St. Patrick's Purgatory* has borrowed the feature from *Paul*. Sect. 11: The account of the earthly paradise very closely resembles that which we find in the *Vision of Alberic*. The feature of the souls being clad in garments of various colors seems to have originated with the *Vision of Thespesius* (compare p. 28, above).

#### 4. VISION OF THE MONK OF EYNESHAM (EVESHAM).

##### *Bibliographical Summary.*

There are seven manuscripts containing a Latin version of this vision. For those at the British Museum, see Ward, *Catalogue of Romances*, II, p. 493 f. For those at Oxford, see Sir Thomas Hardy's *Catalogue of Materials for British History*, Vol. I, pt. I, pages 78–79; 81. The Latin text has also been inserted in Roger of Wendover's *Flowers of History*, ed. Hewlett, Rolls Ser. I, pp. 246–266; Roger of Wendover's *Chronicle*, Bohn's Antiquarian

Library, II, pp. 148–164; Matthew Paris' *Chronica Major*, Rolls Ser. II, p. 243 f.; Ralph of Coggeshale, *Chron. Anglicanum*, Rolls Ser., pp. 71–72.

No English MSS. are known. English version by William Machlenia: "A mervelous revelacion . . . . to a monke of Euyshamme" (c. 1482); see Arber's *Reprints*, No. 18. The Latin text is closely followed.

The vision purports to have been revealed by St. Nicholas to a monk, sometimes called Edmund, of the Abbey of Eynsham, in Oxfordshire, from the night before Good Friday to Easter eve, 1196. This is also the date under which we find it in Matthew Paris' chronicle. The author was Adam, sub-prior of the monastery, as we are told in the preface to the *Vision of Thurcill*.<sup>1</sup> Adam became abbot of Eynsham in 1213, whence he was deposed in 1228. This Adam has recently<sup>2</sup> been shown to have been no other than the chaplain of St. Hugh of Lincoln, Adam, the author of the *Magna Vita*. The evidence for the identification seems sufficient, the author of the *Vision of the Monk of Eynsham* being expressly termed, in the preface to *Thurcill*, "chaplain to Hugh, Bishop of Lincoln."

### *Synopsis of Contents.*

1. Falls into a trance, and remains in this condition for two days.
2. The guide is an old man, clad in white (St. Nicholas).
3. They go towards the East.
4. They first see a horrible plain, marshy and filthy. There are here large numbers of souls, tormented according to the nature of their crimes (not specified), but all expressed the hope of salvation. First purgatory.
5. A deep valley, hemmed in by a circle of rocks. In the centre was a lake, from which proceeded bubbles of fetid and

<sup>1</sup> "And yet another vision has been clearly recorded which was seen in the monastery of Eynsham in the year 1196; and Adam, the sub-prior of the monastery, a most grave and religious man, wrote this narrative in an elegant style, even as he heard it from the mouth of him whose soul had been set free from the body for two days and nights," etc.

<sup>2</sup> H. Thurston, *The Life of St. Hugh of Lincoln*, London, 1898, p. 348 f.

insupportable vapors. On the sides of the mountains burned terrible fires, the flames of which reached to heaven. Souls were plunged first into the lake, then into the fires, which hurled them into the air, like sparks from a furnace, and threw them upon the summit of the rocks, where they were beaten upon by snow, hail, and cold winds. Souls here were gathered together in troops, like to like. Second purgatory.

6. Immense plain filled with sulphurous smoke and burning pitch, which, rising up like a mountain, filled this horrible place. Fearful reptiles covered the ground, and fed upon the miserable souls, who were further tormented by demons, running about like mad, who tore their flesh with burning pincers.

7. Place in which perpetrators of crimes against nature are tormented in an appropriate manner. These will be judged on Doomsday, whether they are to be saved or consigned to eternal punishment.

8. Abode of the blessed: vast plain, full of sweet smells and beautiful flowers. Three divisions: in the first, the souls were dressed in garments which, though not spotted or dirty, were only of a dull white; in the second, the souls had white and shining garments. The third division was heaven itself, separated from the second by a wall of crystal, of infinite extent, at the gate of which were crowds of souls waiting for admittance.

### *Discussion.*

The *Vision of Drihthelm* has been followed more closely than any other single work in this vision. There are, however, many borrowings from other sources.

In sects. 1 and 2 we have the customary conditions adduced under which most visions were revealed. St. Nicholas is a novelty, but he is "clad in white," as the saints, and the blessed in general, always are (see note on *Apocalypse of Peter*, 3, p. 32, above).—Sect. 3: In the *Vision of Drihthelm*, the direction taken was the north-east (compare p. 53, above; also *Enoch*, xxvii, p. 42; *Apocalypse of Peter*, 3, p. 32).—Sect. 4: The horrible plain, marshy and filthy, we have already frequently met with. Tormenting according to the nature of the crime is a feature borrowed from



the *Vision of Paul* (sect. 7), the *Apocalypse of Peter* (p. 36, above), and the oriental accounts.—Sect. 5 gives us the well-known lake. (Compare p. 37, above.) The valley with its encircling rocks, as well as the fires with their souls, are undoubtedly copied, directly or indirectly, from the *Vision of Drihthelm* (p. 53, above). The alternate torment of heat and cold which has been so often met with is here probably also ascribable to the *Vision of Drihthelm*.—Sect. 6 presents no new features. Tearing the flesh with pincers has a distinctly oriental flavor, though we find it in *Tundale* (sect. 11).—Sect. 8: The souls in the abode of the blessed are divided into three groups—a division which has already been discussed elsewhere (p. 72 f., above). The souls are further distinguished by the relative brightness of their garments. The wall of crystal is from the *Book of Enoch*, XIV, 10 (p. 22, above), perhaps through *Tundale* (sects. 16 ; 20).

## 5. THE VISION OF THURCILL.

### *Bibliographical Summary.*

Ward, *Catalogue of Romances*, II, p. 506 f., describes two Latin MSS. of this vision in the British Museum. The Latin text was printed in Roger of Wendover's *Flowers of History*, ed. Hewlett, Rolls Series, Vol. I, p. 497 f. Also in Roger of Wendover's *Chronicle*, Bohn's Library, II, p. 221 f.; Matthew Paris, *Chronica Major*, Rolls Series, Vol. II, p. 497 f.

There are no English MSS. of the vision.

The vision was revealed in the year 1206 to a husbandman of Stisted, in Essex. Ward takes the author to be Ralph of Coggeshale, and there seems to be no reason to doubt this, though Ralph never mentions the name of Thurcill in his *Chronicle*. But compare the *Chronicon Anglicanum*, Rolls Ser., ed. by Joseph Stevenson, pp. 72, 141, 162-3, 187.

### *Synopsis of Contents.*

1. Thurcill, a husbandman of Essex, leaves his body and is conducted by St. Julian to purgatory.

2. They go toward the East, and enter a large and glorious hall, supported by three pillars. To this souls go immediately

upon leaving the body, and thence are sent either to purgatory or to hell.

3. Fire of purgatory, between two walls. St. Nicholas is the overseer.

4. A pond, very salt and cold: into this the souls who had passed through the fire are plunged for the purpose of cooling them.

5. A great bridge, covered with nails and spikes, which leads to the mount of joy, where is a church large enough to contain all the people in the world.

6. The hill of judgment (sect. 2). Sts. Michael, Peter, and Paul sit in judgment on the souls. Perfectly white souls are assigned to St. Michael, who sends them unharmed through the flames; spotted souls are sent by Peter to purgatory; whereas Paul and the devil sit one at each end of a large pair of scales, in which are weighed the black souls. If the scales turn to the saint, the soul is sent to purgatory; but if to the devil, it is hurled into a fiery pit just at Paul's feet.

7. Devil comes riding up furiously on a black horse. The horse, Thurcill is told, is a transformed soul, who is tormented by being thus driven. It was the soul of a peer of England.

8. The infernal theatre, in which fiends sit and enjoy a performance by the damned.

(a) Proud man: struts about for some time clad in all the insignia of his proper sin. Suddenly the gay garments in which he is clad burst into flame, and he is thrust back to his place of punishment. Demons tear his flesh with burning pincers, and torture him with boiling pitch and oil. The "smiths of Erebus" then approach him, and drive burning nails through various portions of his body. Being restored to his original shape, the punishment is renewed.

(b) Hypocritical priest: his tongue is torn out by the roots.

(c) Knight who had spent his life in slaughter and rapine. He is clad in armor, and rides a black horse, which vomits flames from mouth and nostrils. He is quickly unhorsed by the demons, who joust with him, after which he is tormented like his predecessors, and then thrust back into his place of punishment.

(d) Lawyer who had died the year in which the vision is related. Thurcill recognizes him. He is forced to act over his

former deeds, pleading on one side, and accepting bribes on the other. He is then forced to swallow the fees thus received, and which have meanwhile been transformed into molten gold. A peculiarly infernal emetic is then administered, the gold is vomited forth, only to be re-swallowed; and so on for a considerable length of time.

(e) Adulterous man and woman. They perform and are tormented in a manner appropriate to their crime.

(f) Backbiters, thieves, incendiaries, dishonest merchants—all of whom are tormented in similar ways.

9. The pit of hell, with four caldrons. In the first caldron, souls are tormented in boiling oil and pitch; in the second, in snow and ice; in the third, in sulphur and fetid liquors; in the fourth, in black, salt water. Every week the souls are changed from one caldron to another: those in the first, to the second, those in the third, to the fourth, and *vice-versa*.

10. The "mount of joy." Souls here suffer no pain, and await admittance to the abode of the blessed. They have been cleansed of their sins by the fires of purgatory.

11. The Earthly Paradise. Immense temple, surrounded by a garden full of flowers, and fruits, and perfumes. The fountain of youth, and the tree of paradise. Under the latter lies Adam, clad in a vest of various colors, reaching from his breast to his feet. With one eye he laughs for the blessed; with the other he weeps for the damned. When the number of the elect shall be complete, he will be entirely covered with his robe, and the world will be at an end. Its various colors denote the different virtues by which the righteous are saved.

Thurcill then returns to his body.

#### *Discussion.*

It is impossible to fix upon any single work as the immediate model for this vision. *Thespesius*, *St. Paul*, *Tundale*, *Monk of Eynsham*, and *St. Patrick's Purgatory* seem all to have contributed somewhat to its varied stock of torments. A number of new features, which we have not encountered in the works thus far treated, are given very especial prominence. These only need be considered in connection with this vision.

Sects. 1, 3, 4, 5, present no new features. St. Nicholas as the overseer (sect. 3) of purgatory may be an echo of *Monk of Eynsham* (sect. 2). The pillars which support the hall of judgment are possibly from the *Book of Enoch*, XVIII, 2 (p. 23, above). The hall itself, as well as the mode of judging the souls therein (sect. 6), is, as has been said, based directly or indirectly upon the Egyptian judgment (compare p. 26 f., above). The episode of the demon driving a soul (sect. 7) is analogous to a scene in the *Vision of Alberic* (compare p. 46, above, where other parallels are cited). The infernal theatre (sect. 8) we have not yet met with. It is of rare occurrence in works earlier than the *Vision of Thurcill*, but becomes rather common later. In the eighth (?) century *Vision of Barontus*, sinners are described as sitting around a great area, sorrowfully, in chairs of lead, each particular class of criminals grouped together. "There is a copy of this vision," says Wright,<sup>1</sup> "in a MS. of the twelfth century, in the British Museum, MS. Cotton Tiber. C. XI. There was another copy of this vision in MS. Cotton Otho A XIII, which perished in the fire. It was there said to have occurred in the sixth year of the reign of Theodoric, perhaps Theodoric IV, king of Austrasia and Burgundy, and in that case, A. D. 726."

A closer parallel, pointed out by Ward, *Catalogue of Romances*, II, p. 570, is in the *Vision of Gunthelm* (compare Helinand's *Chron.*: Migne, *Pat. Lat.*, CCXII, cols. 1060-1063), who, after leaving paradise, visits the furnaces of hell; and he sees bishops there, and monks, and nuns, acting their former misdeeds for the gratification of the fiends. This may possibly have suggested, thinks Ward, the "Infernal Pageants," but the picture was probably a commonplace. For the "Infernal Pageants," see Warton's *History of Poetry*, sect. XXVII, under the heading of Kalendar of Shepherdes. In the *Vision of Gunthelm*, too, Adam's robe is described in a manner very similar to *Thurcill* (sect. 11).

The "smiths of Erebus" (sect. 8 a) are interesting reminiscences of *Tundale* (sect. 11), and *Thespesius* (p. 29, above).

<sup>1</sup> *St. Patrick's Purgatory*, etc., p. 105, note.

Sect. 9 presents the familiar pit of hell. The four caldrons recall the burning caldron, with its seven flames, of the *Vision of St. Paul* (sect. 2).

Various colors, denoting various virtues (sect. 11), is probably a variation upon the garments of different colors in *St. Patrick's Purgatory* (sect. 11). In fact, the whole description of the earthly paradise is very similar in these two works.

## LIFE.

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I was born in Baltimore, Md., July 9, 1875. Having received my earliest education in the public schools of that city, I became, in 1885, a student at the preparatory school of Dr. E. Deichmann. Thence, in the fall of 1891, I entered the Johns Hopkins University, and in June, 1894, received the degree of Bachelor of Arts from that institution. My advanced studies were pursued under the guidance of Professors Bright, Browne, Wood, and Learned ; Drs. Vos, Rambeau, Menger, and Marden. To all these I take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation and gratitude; to Professors Browne and Wood, in particular, I am indebted for many hints and inspirations which have proved of inestimable value. Above all, however, I wish to thank Professor Bright, to whose sound scholarship, untiring aid, and ready sympathy I owe far more than I can ever hope to repay.



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